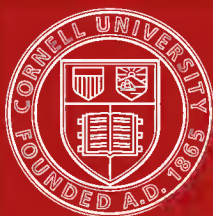


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WILLIAM BROWN STREET IN 1903.

(Formerly Shaw's Brow.)







# LIVERPOOL PUBLIC LIBRARIES

## A History of Fifty Years

BY

PETER COWELL, F.R.H.S.

CHIEF LIBRARIAN

*WITH PORTRAITS AND ILLUSTRATIONS.*

“Books are legacies that genius leaves to mankind, to be delivered down from generation to generation.”—*Addison.*

LIVERPOOL

FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY, WILLIAM BROWN STREET

1903

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LIVERPOOL:  
GILBERT G. WALMSLEY, PRINTER, 50, LORD STREET.  
—  
1903.

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## PREFACE

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I HAVE to thank the Library, Museum and Arts Committee for publishing this historical account of the foundation and development of the Liverpool Public Libraries, which, owing to my long and intimate connection with them, I have written with so much pleasure. My work has been materially lightened by the cordial interest taken in it by the Library Staff. To Mr. Henry E. Curran I am much indebted for his assistance while preparing these pages and passing them through the press. My thanks are also due to Mr. Charles Robertson and to Mr. William May, the latter for preparing the index. From Mr. George H. Parry, and also from Mr. E. Webster Jones (of the Corporation Stationery Department) I have received much valuable assistance in regard to the illustrations.

PETER COWELL.

*Free Public Library,  
Liverpool, April, 1903.*

LIBRARIES,  
MUSEUMS AND GALLERY OF ARTS  
OF THE  
CORPORATION OF LIVERPOOL

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THE RIGHT HON. W. W. RUTHERFORD, M.P., LORD MAYOR.

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# HISTORY OF THE LIVERPOOL PUBLIC LIBRARIES.

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## CHAPTER I.

### INTRODUCTORY: WILLIAM EWART AND THE PUBLIC LIBRARY MOVEMENT.

FOR some years prior to the passing of the Public Libraries Act of 1850, a strong feeling had grown up, among thoughtful and enlightened men interested in the cause of education, that the lack of public collections of books in the great centres of population, helpful to all classes of students, was a matter which called for speedy remedy. Our working classes it was felt, were too self-satisfied with the lead they had hitherto taken in trade and manufactures, and that if that lead was to be maintained, greater technical knowledge and political wisdom was not only desirable but essential.

It was perceived that other nations were much more alive than ourselves to the advantages of a practical education, and were thereby superseding us in many arts and manufactures in which we had formerly held the foremost place.

It was regarded, speaking generally, as more than unfortunate that earnest students should be hindered in their work of investigation and research by the want of ready access to important books of reference. One of the foremost to perceive the use and importance of public libraries, and to take action to enable municipalities to establish them under Parliamentary sanction, was William Ewart, after whose name the first Free Libraries Act is commonly called. As a native of Liverpool, one of her merchant princes of the highest integrity, and the representative of the town in Parliament from June, 1830 to 1841, it is natural that the people of Liverpool generally, should have held him in the greatest esteem. There are cases when the exigencies of party politics are to be deeply regretted, and those which severed his connection with his native town was one of them.

Mr. Ewart had in the large towns—particularly in Birmingham, Liverpool, and Manchester—numerous sympathisers and supporters of the cause in which he felt so deep an interest, and which had begun to engross so much of his time and attention. As early as February, 1848, Dr. Hume, at a meeting of the Roscoe Club in Liverpool, gave expression to the feelings of many persons besides himself, when he said that he “wished for something that Liverpool had never yet seen, but which he hoped to live to see in Liverpool—a large public library. There were plenty of private libraries, but no public one, as there was in almost every other large town in



WILLIAM EWART, M.P.



England; no library to which a sailor could go and ask, with the certainty of being accommodated, to look at a Nautical Almanac—where a clergyman might go and refer to a Clergy List—or where a merchant or other person might go and be able to see Pigot's Directory."

On March 15th, 1849, Mr. Ewart presented to the House of Commons two petitions from the inhabitants of Birmingham, complaining of the want of public libraries. In bringing these before the House, he stated in the course of his speech, that he "believed that the want of such institutions had been a serious damage to our literature. While for a hundred years the writers of the Continent had the consultation of public libraries at their command, those of England had wanted them. Gibbon, in his correspondence, had complained that 'the greatest metropolis in the world was destitute of that useful institution—a public library.' It was stated in one of the works of the father of an Hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Disraeli) that, in his time, readers were kept waiting two days for a book at the British Museum. Again, let them take the case of Mr. Roscoe, at Liverpool, who was obliged to form his own library before he could compose such works as the *Life of Lorenzo*, or of *Leo X.*, &c." The Hon. Gentleman concluded by proposing the following motion: "That a Select Committee be appointed [on existing Public Libraries in Great Britain and Ireland, and] on the best means of extending the establishment of Libraries freely open to the public, especially in

large towns." This motion was carried, with the exception of the words enclosed in brackets, which were deleted.

In the meanwhile, Manchester and Liverpool had been giving definite expression to their desires for similar institutions. Strengthened by popular sentiment in such large centres of industry, Mr. Ewart, on February 14th, 1850, moved for leave to bring in a bill for enabling Town Councils to establish Public Libraries and Museums. In support of it, he said that there was scarcely any country in Europe so inadequately provided with public libraries as England. "If the condition of the great manufacturing town on the Continent and in England were compared, how great were the advantages in favour of the former. In Italy and Germany no great town was without a library. Here there was only a sort of a small public library in Manchester; but there was none in Glasgow, Leeds, Sheffield, and other great manufacturing towns; whilst in America, and in Rouen, Lyons, Marseilles, and other towns in France, the working classes resorted in numbers to the free libraries that were open to them. The literature of the country must naturally have suffered from the want of such institutions. The Committee (appointed by the House during the previous session) turned their attention especially to the point, and found it to be so. All the evidence taken upon that part of the subject tended to prove that the labouring population would be far more advanced if they had such opportunities as were afforded by means of public libraries to the

working classes of other countries. There were two kinds of education—that imparted in schools, and that acquired by the individuals themselves; and they had the authority of Gibbon for saying that the education which a man gives to himself was far more important than that which he could acquire from a teacher. In public libraries the opportunity of self teaching would be afforded to the labouring classes. The Bill he now proposed went somewhat further than that which was commonly called the Museums Act, and as the Museums Act contained one or two inconsistencies, he thought it better to consolidate the two bills, and to enable town councils to found both museums and public libraries. The Museums Bill gave to town councils the power of levying a small rate, not exceeding one halfpenny in the pound, for the establishment of public museums. He had adopted that provision in the present Bill to enable town councils to purchase land and erect buildings, and furnish them as libraries and museums out of the proceeds. The Bill would not give to the town councillors the power to purchase books; they relied upon books being supplied by the donations of individuals. But a very practical question that might be put was, whether the Bill was called for by the people for whom it was intended? He replied that it was. It had been anticipated by the people. Some of the towns had anticipated a Libraries Bill by turning the Museums Bill to their use. One great advantage which might be hereafter derived from such institutions he should mention. It was, that

their contents would be illustrative of the local and the natural history of the places in which they were established. The act was founded entirely on a popular basis. They were not about to ask the Government for any assistance, pecuniary or otherwise. They merely asked that these institutions might be legally founded by the people, supported by the people, and enjoyed by the people."

In reading over this bill and the speech of Mr. Ewart in its support, and those of other advocates of the free library movement at this time, one cannot fail to notice how sanguine they appeared to be that the supply of books, the very essence of their aim and desires, need not be provided for in the money clauses of the bill, as donations would be so numerous and of such a character as to make the purchase of books an unnecessary consideration.

How fallacious this expectation was in regard to standard books of reference, and up-to-date books in science and art, and generally of such books as give importance to a public library, those who have had to do with their early management know full well. It is true that many books from generous friends of the movement were presented, but the present splendid libraries of Birmingham, Manchester, and Liverpool would not merit such an epithet if they had had to depend wholly upon donations. Mr. Ewart referred to one feature of the proposed work of the libraries he desired to bring into existence, viz., that of local history. This important work has now become fully



recognised by all municipal libraries, and none more so than the library whose jubilee is now celebrated. Many maps, drawings, pamphlets, and other illustrative literary matter important in their bearing on local history must have perished for the want of institutions where they could have been garnered, and administrators zealous to secure them. Of the extensive and unique local collection in the Liverpool Public Library begun in the first year of its existence more will be said later on.

Before the Public Libraries Bill became law, Mr. Ewart and other advocates of the measure had many prejudices and much opposition to overcome. Fifty years ago the friends of free libraries were by no means numerous, and we may deservedly award Mr. Ewart every praise for the courage and ability with which he fought and won the free library battle. The nature of the opposition arguments at that time, viewed in the light of the present, is not without a certain interest, as indicating the opinions and feelings of many men in high places. That opponents were both numerous and influential we may, I think, infer by the extreme modesty of the demands of the promoters as contained in the first Free Library Bill. The peculiarity of a library bill excluding the purchase of books from its financial clauses naturally laid it open to criticism. "As books," said one, "which seemed not only the best but most necessary furniture for a library, were left to the chances of voluntary or charitable contributions, the expenses of building and furnishing for which it was proposed

to make a rate might be supplied from the same source." Another thought "the agricultural interest would be injured." It was conceived that the bill "enabled the richer and more influential inhabitants to tax the poorer inhabitants for their own special purposes, and that money might be better expended in providing food and employment for the people. When they had done this it was time enough to provide amusements and recreation of this character." Whether these views are now wholly of the past it is difficult to say.

## CHAPTER II.

### FIRST MEASURES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A FREE LIBRARY IN LIVERPOOL.

WHILE Mr. Ewart was energetically promoting the library movement in Parliament, other kindred spirits were zealously co-operating with him by evoking and forming that public opinion on the question to which Parliament generally defers when it becomes satisfied of its sincerity and wide spread character. No doubt, moreover, the action of the neighbouring towns of Salford and Warrington in establishing public libraries under the doubtful powers of the Museums Act had its effect in other places.

Liverpool, at this time, was not without libraries; but they were not accessible to the people at large, being either subscription libraries or connected with learned societies.

As early as 1756 the Lyceum Library was established, which claims to be the earliest subscription library in the kingdom. In 1797 the Athenæum was founded, and this has the credit of being the first library having a news-room attached to it. Both these were, however, in the nature of clubs and largely of a private character. The Mechanics' and other similar institutions were furnished with libraries, but

to these also the public had not free access. The library needed, however, was one of much wider scope and conducted on broader lines and stored with the books necessary for general research and capable of meeting the varied wants of students. Mr. Ewart gives Liverpool, his native town, the credit of being first in the foundation of such an institution. It is certainly to her honour that she was among the earliest municipalities to recognise this, and to found a public library of this kind. In her initiative she may perhaps be entitled to more credit than the date of opening her library on October 18th, 1852, might seem to warrant. Without exaggeration it may be said that the father of the movement in Liverpool was Mr. James A. Picton. To his able advocacy and untiring energy must be largely if not wholly attributed the favourable support which the subject received in the Council Chamber, as well as the disarming of the opposition, both within the Chamber and without, by those who doubted the advantages of such institutions. As a lover of books, an earnest student, a man of considerable literary ability, an active member of various learned societies, a clear thinker and a cogent reasoner, Mr. Picton's whole-heartedness in the matter went without saying, and always obtained him a deferential hearing when advocating the value and expediency of the institution he sought to establish.

In the early part of the year 1850, Mr. Picton gave notice of his intention to bring the question



*Photo. by Medrington.*

SIR JAMES A. PICTON, F.S.A.



of Free Libraries before the Liverpool Corporation; and accordingly at a meeting of the Town Council on Wednesday, April 3rd, of that year, he moved—"That a special Committee be appointed to consider the practicability of the establishment of a public library in Liverpool freely open to all classes; and to report thereon to this Council."

Mr. Picton, in bringing the motion forward, read an extract from the report of the Committee of the House of Commons in which it was stated that the great step was to procure a place of deposit, a local habitation for the goods. That once found, the donations would abundantly pour in. Donations had been the principal source of all the principal libraries which had been formed. Mr. Picton "did not go quite so far in his expectations as the Committee of the House of Commons; but he had no doubt that the library, when once established, would soon be carried on without any expense to the town. There was already in the possession of the Council a very valuable collection of Parliamentary books, which had been collected by the late Earl of Harrowby and presented by the present Earl at the close of his long and useful connexion with the town, and those would form a little nucleus, about which further donations and funds would gather. He thought, too, that there would be a surplus out of the Museum rate; but without going into that, was it too much to expect that amongst its magnificent projects, some small

droppings from the cornucopia of the Council might be permitted to diffuse themselves into this channel? If, however, these sources failed, he had full reliance on the public spirit of Liverpool, which never permitted a great and good project to want support. There was no other body to which an institution of this kind could be entrusted so safely as the Town Council. Other bodies were fluctuating, whilst the Council was perpetually renewed. He might also remark that there were, even in Liverpool, many cases in which gentlemen of wealth had spent their lives in amassing literary treasures—large and valuable collections of books—and at the close of their lives, these had almost uniformly been brought to the hammer and dispersed; whilst it was more than probable that, if there had been an institution of the kind proposed then in existence, the owners of these collections would have been proud to have left them to their townsmen. Again, such an institution was likely to fall into a sleepy tone, unless it was brought under the wholesome control of public opinion; and he knew of no better way in which this could be efficiently accomplished than by placing it in the hands of representatives freely chosen year by year.” The motion was agreed to, and the following gentlemen were named as the Committee:—Alderman James Lawrence, Alderman William Bennett, Alderman T. B. Horsfall, and Councillors George Holt, Hugh Hornby, Thomas Wagstaff, John Woodruff, Thomas Avison, and James A. Picton.



Comparing this speech of Mr. Picton with that of Mr. Ewart on presenting the petitions from Birmingham in favour of a public library, it is noticeable how generally accepted was the idea of the early promoters of public libraries that they had but to provide a library building when books worthy of acceptance would simply stream in from donations and bequests. However satisfactorily this may have been realised by other libraries, Liverpool had well nigh entered upon her library jubilee year before any important collection of books had been made or bequeathed to her library. When, however, the Art Library of Mr. Hugh Frederick Hornby came into her possession, after his demise, ample compensation would seem to be awarded her for years of hope and expectation, for the dreams and promises of Mr. Ewart and Mr. Picton to be realised. It is pleasing to be able to associate this magnificent gift with a son of the Mr. Hugh Hornby, whose name appears on the earliest committee formed to found the library where these valuable books now find a final resting place.

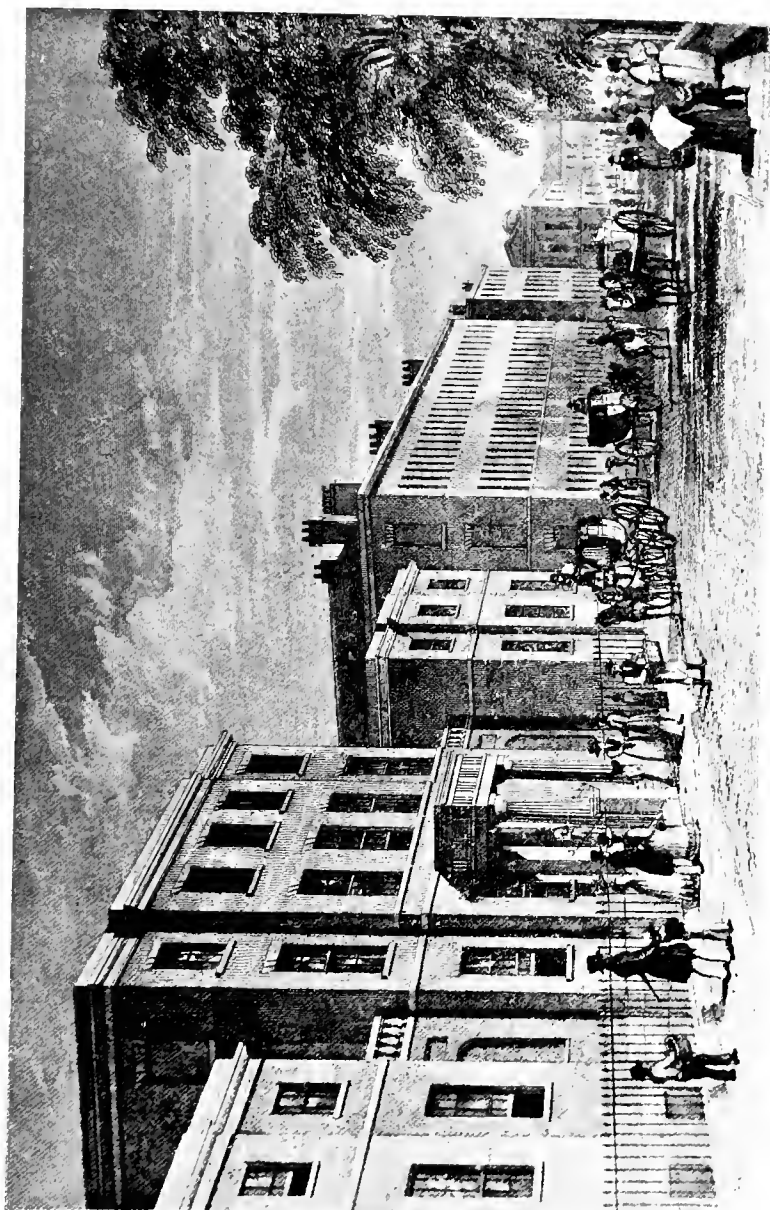
The Liverpool Free Public Library is established under a private Act, the scope of which is indicated by its title: "An Act to Establish a Public Library, Museum, and Gallery of Arts." How Liverpool came to require an Act of its own, and why it bears so comprehensive a title, is a matter of some local interest and worthy of explanation.

In the year 1814 was projected the Liverpool Royal Institution, with the object of "promoting

the increase and diffusion of literature, science, and art." The upper classes in the town took the matter up with considerable zeal, mainly through the exertions and fervour of William Roscoe, who was always conspicuous in the cause and interest of literature and art, and £20,000 was raised in shares. Suitable premises were bought in Colquitt Street, and on the 25th November, 1817, the Institution was opened with an eloquent address from its great promoter, William Roscoe himself. An important collection of pictures, principally of the Italian School, was formed, together with a museum of natural history. Notwithstanding the endeavours made to achieve the object and intentions of the promoters, it never from the first was more than a partial success, and gradually languished until it became little more than a name.

It was at the time when it was best known as a place of meeting of various learned societies, that negotiations between the Trustees of the Royal Institution and the Corporation were opened with a view to transferring the specimens and property to the Corporation, and coupling with the Natural History Museum and Art Gallery a Public Library. The nature of these negotiations and the decision arrived at are set forth in the following report, which was submitted to the Council on September 4th, 1850:—

“The committee appointed by the Council on the 3rd of April last, to consider and report upon the desirability and practicability of establishing a public library in Liverpool, free and open to all classes, having devoted considerable time and



ROYAL INSTITUTION, COLQUITT STREET.



attention to the investigation of the subject, now submit their proceedings, and submit the following report :—

“ The attention of your committee was directed in the first instance to ascertain how far such an institution was called for by the circumstances of the town, and the general feeling of the inhabitants. On this part of the subject the evidence was very clear and decisive, the object aimed at being to throw open sources of information on all subjects of an interesting and instructive character to all classes at all seasonable hours, and free from charge. There is not at present in the town of Liverpool even a remote approximation to it. The libraries at the Athenæum and Lyceum are proprietary institutions, within the reach of certain classes only. The Collegiate and Mechanics' Institutions possess libraries, but they are parts of the general institutions, and only accessible to subscribing members. A Mechanics' and Apprentices' Library was established some years ago, but appears to have sunk into inefficiency for want of support. These, and perhaps one or two other instances of a kindred but very limited character, present the nearest approach to a public library which Liverpool at present affords. There is not, however, any collection of books of the smallest description to which the public can have free access. As was stated by one of the witnesses examined before your committee, there is not a place where even a Gore's Directory, or tide table, or an almanac can be consulted as a matter of right by anyone desirous of doing so. In this

respect Liverpool is singularly deficient; Manchester, Dublin, Glasgow, Edinburgh, and most large towns having, more or less, deposits of books of a purely public and gratuitous character. That a free public library would be a boon of a very important character to all classes appears to be the general feeling of the community at large. Your committee have taken the opinions of various individuals moving in different stations of life—navigators, clergymen, masters employing large numbers of workmen, &c.—and find but one feeling pervading the whole, that of anxiety for carrying out the proposal. Your committee having thus arrived at a unanimous conclusion as to the need for such an institution, and the desirability of its establishment, proceeded next to consider the means for carrying it out. From the encouraging manner in which the project had been received, and the various promises of support which have been tendered, there seems little doubt that donations of books to a considerable amount might be calculated on towards the establishment of a public library. The carrying on the institution, defraying the cost of management, and providing continual additions to the books would form a charge on the corporate funds; but your committee have every reason to believe that, from all ordinary expenditure, the surplus arising from the halfpenny rate already levied under the Museums Act, after defraying the expense of the gardens, would be sufficient. The most important question appeared to your committee to be the providing a suitable building in a central locality, which should be

sufficiently commodious for the present and future requirements of the library, presenting an appearance worthy of one of the public institutions of the town, without entailing too serious an outlay of the corporate funds. In the course of the inquiry of your committee relative to that part of the subject, the Royal Institution was named as presenting suitable premises, in an excellent locality for the purpose, and it was suggested that probably an arrangement could be made with the proprietors to place the library in part of the premises in Colquitt Street. Communications were opened between your committee and the committee of the Royal Institution with a view to this end. The views of your committee were met in a most liberal and public spirited manner. Several lengthened conferences have taken place between the committees and sub-committees of the two bodies, in the course of which, views of a more extensive character applying to the institution as a whole presented themselves as to the practicability of rendering it a free public museum and gallery of art, which shall eventually be to Liverpool what the British Museum is to the Metropolis.

“The Royal Institution was established in the year 1820, for the encouragement of art, science, and literature in the town of Liverpool, and in the year 1822, a charter of incorporation was obtained from the Crown, limiting the property to its original uses, and providing for its future management. Above £25,000 has been expended in the land, buildings, library, gallery,

and museum, besides the numerous valuable donations which have been from time to time presented. The institution has been maintained by the interest of a certain portion of the capital invested for the purpose, and from the rents of part of the buildings which have been let. The income derived from these sources is sufficient to provide for the ordinary expenditure, but the committee feel that at present the usefulness of the institution is restricted, and the objects for which it was established are not carried out to the extent it is desirable. £100 per annum is at present contributed to the institution out of the corporate funds, in return for which the public are admitted gratuitously on the first Monday in every month. The interest which these public days excite, and the thousands of persons who attend, give evidence of the value placed by the inhabitants generally on the institution, and their desire to avail themselves of it.

“Under these circumstances, the Committee of the Royal Institution have come to the conclusion of recommending to the proprietors to make over the entire institution, consisting of the land and buildings on the west side of Colquitt Street, the gallery of art, and the gymnasium opposite, the museum of natural history, the laboratory, the paintings, sculptures, casts, and books, clear of all debts and liabilities whatever, to be vested in the Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses, for the free use and enjoyment of the people of Liverpool.



“ The schools are not included in the proposal, but will be conducted as heretofore, under the management of the committee of the proprietors. The only condition annexed to the arrangement is the following:—That an Act of Parliament shall be applied for, transferring the property in trust to the Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses, who shall be bound to keep up the institution in a state of efficiency, and that its future management shall be in a committee, one half appointed by the Council, and one half by the shareholders, with the addition of a chairman to be appointed by the Council. The proceedings of the committee to be subject to the confirmation of the Council.

“ Your committee feel that in entertaining and recommending this project they have gone beyond the precise limits of the terms of their instructions. Their justification must be found in the fact, that the plan proposed naturally arose out of the inquiries instituted in connexion with the library. The proposal has appeared to them so advantageous, in every point of view, to the public of Liverpool, that they cordially and unanimously recommend its adoption by the Council.

“ The library would form a legitimate and very important part of the institution, and your committee are of opinion that, with judicious management and a moderate expenditure, the museum, library, and the gallery of art would speedily become an honour to the town of Liverpool, and a constant source of interest and improvement to its inhabitants.”

On moving the adoption of this report Mr. J. A. Picton said that he thought that the business of the Corporation was not simply to administer funds, but to give thought and afford opportunity for the intellectual and moral advantage of the community. Viewing the need for a public library merely from an economic standpoint, the benefit of an institution to those engaged in commercial and industrial pursuits would be manifest.

After further remarks from Mr. T. B. Horsfall, Mr. George Holt, Mr. James A. Tobin, and others, the Council adopted the report by 37 to 10.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE SCOPE OF THE PROJECT WIDENED BY THE EARL OF DERBY'S BEQUEST.

IN carrying out the recommendations of this report, a bill entitled the "Liverpool Royal Institution (Transfer of Property in Liverpool, Corporation Public Library and Museum)" was drafted and introduced in Parliament. During its progress through the House, and after it had passed its second reading, a discussion was raised on April 2nd, 1851, in the Liverpool Town Council on the money clauses of the bill; the feeling being that the financial arrangements with the trustees of the Royal Institution were not sufficiently favourable to the ratepayers. After a somewhat acrimonious discussion an amendment was carried by 29 to 23, the result of which was that matters were brought to a standstill.

As the effect of this decision of the Town Council materially modifying the financial arrangement contained in the Royal Institution Bill, was to jeopardise the bill altogether through the strong objection to this alteration by the Trustees, so an effort was made at the following

meeting of the Council to induce it to rescind that decision, and agree to the bill as it stood originally. With that object the Chairman of the Library Committee, Mr. Picton, brought forward a motion, as follows :—

“ To rescind or vary a resolution of the Council, passed at the adjourned meeting of the Council, held on the 2nd April last, on consideration of a bill now before Parliament, intituled *The Liverpool Royal Institution Bill (Transfer of Property, &c.)*, by which resolution clause 12 of that bill, as printed, was directed to be struck out, and a new clause substituted in lieu thereof, and that such new clause be struck out, and a clause inserted in strict conformity with the arrangement by which the Committee of the Royal Institution agreed to transfer their property to the Corporation, viz., that a sum not less than £700 per annum should be expended in the maintenance and support of the existing departments of the Institution, irrespective of the contemplated Library.”

This attempt to revert to the original terms of the bill did not succeed. An amendment, “ That inasmuch as the proprietors of the Royal Institution will refuse to transfer the said Institution on the terms stated in the bill proposed for the consideration of Parliament, as amended by this Council, resolved, that the said bill approved of on the 2nd of April be withdrawn,” was submitted and carried by 21 to 18. The bill was consequently abandoned.

Though much annoyance resulted from this action of the Council, the friends of the library

movement were by no means disheartened. Following the Municipal elections of November, 1850, a new Library and Museum Committee was formed, consisting of the following gentlemen: Messrs. J. A. Picton, James Lawrence, George Holt, William Bennett, Thomas Wagstaff, John Woodruff, Thomas Avison, Hugh Hornby, and Thomas Fleming.

It is pleasing to note that the interest in the project was not confined to members of the Town Council. Vigorous action was being taken by a numerous and influential body of gentlemen, favourable to the establishment of a Free Public Library and Museum. On the 10th December, 1850, a meeting was held in the Council Chamber of the Town Hall, at which the Venerable Archdeacon Brooks presided. After speeches from the Chairman and Mr. J. A. Picton, Mr. William Earle moved, that "The establishment of a free library for the use of inhabitants of this borough is highly approved by this meeting." This was carried unanimously. The Rev. Dr. Raffles then moved that "It is expedient to form an Association to promote the formation of the proposed Library and Museum, and to solicit donations of books, money, and specimens for the use of the Institution." This resolution was seconded by Mr. Joseph Mayer, supported by Mr. William Rathbone, Mr. John Gladstone and others, and carried. Mr. Thomas B. Horsfall was elected president of the Association here formed, and Dr. Hume secretary. On the 18th January, 1851, this Association issued a circular appealing to the

public for donations of money and books. This circular, which will be found in the appendix, is interesting from the important local names attached to it, and from its dominant note, that of a public library, rather than a museum and art gallery. The book donations mentioned therein are meagre, and not of a character calculated to justify the expectations of those who thought that the library could be formed and afterwards largely maintained by this means, neither was the response to this public appeal more reassuring.

An extract from a leading article in the *Liverpool Mercury* at this time illustrates the somewhat timorous view held by an important paper which regarded the education of the working classes with considerable favour. So it may easily be inferred how difficult it was for the promoters of public libraries to overcome the doubts and fears of some, and the prejudices of others, as to the expediency of giving the working classes the unrestrained command of books.

“Considerable discrimination will be required in the choice of works it is thus proposed to circulate freely amongst the people, and it is worth while considering the expediency of introducing political or theological treatises. Should it be decided that such works be admitted, then it will be necessary to afford the materials by which a man may be able to form his own opinion, by giving him works written on both sides of the question, whatever it happens to be. Generally speaking, however, it will hardly be within the object of a public

library to circulate works other than those which may be perused with pleasure and advantage by every member of a working man's family; and experience teaches us that there is hardly anything so fatal to institutions of this kind as constant discussions on subjects which, from their nature, are apt to enlist the aid of the passions and drown the voice of reason, and to convert good-fellowship and harmony into enmity and discord."

While matters were in this anomalous position the following letter was received by the Mayor from the 14th Earl of Derby:—

KNOWSLEY, *July 8th*, 1851.

SIR,—It was the anxious wish of my dear and lamented father, as it is my own, that the very extensive and valuable collection of stuffed birds and animals which it was the labour of his life to form, should not, after his death, be dispersed, but rendered as far as possible available to the amusement and instruction of his countrymen and neighbours. Among his private papers I find one upon this subject, embodying an arrangement upon which he had communicated with me, which so clearly sets forth his views that I cannot do better than transcribe his own words:—"With the anxious desire that what I have collected during the long existence that has been granted me may be devoted more particularly to the gratification and, I would hope, advantage of the part of this country with which I have been more immediately connected, and in which I cannot but feel a more direct interest, I would desire that this museum should be placed in the care of a body of trustees, after the model of the British Museum, to be placed in the town or environs of Liverpool, hoping that the public authorities there may think it fit to erect some building for its reception, which might, perhaps

with advantage, be placed in connexion with the Collegiate Institution already established in that town. If this suggestion should be adopted, or favourably received, I would propose that the Earl of Derby for the time being, and one other member of my family should be trustees; that my personal friend Richard Earle should also be one during his life, if he will be pleased to accept the trust; and that the Mayor of Liverpool, and the two rectors of the town for the time being shall be members *ex officio*, on the part of the town, and the incumbents of Knowsley and of Huyton on the part of the country. That the above persons shall be the first trustees, and that they have power to add to their number, to fill up vacancies as they shall occur, and to lay down rules and regulations for the better management and preservation of the museum, and for the purpose of making it as beneficial as possible for the amusement and instruction of the inhabitants of the town and neighbourhood in the first place, and next, of the public in general. As it is my principal object, by this arrangement, to keep together in one body the collection which has been formed by me, and to devote it to the benefit of the rising generation, I have ventured to suggest its being annexed to the Collegiate Institution, as by that means it would appear to be more directly available for the purposes of instruction and reference; and I would further add my wish that it should bear the name of its original founder, as some memorial of the interest I have, from boyhood, felt in the study of natural history, and my earnest wish to make that which has formed a constant pleasure during my own life, as far as possible, conducive to the welfare and gratification of my fellow countrymen and neighbours."

I have only to request that you will have the kindness to bring this subject under the consideration of the Council at the earliest period consistent with your own convenience, and to express an earnest hope on my part that nothing in the conditions attached may interpose to prevent their acceptance of an offer which



seems to hold out no inconsiderable advantage to the population of Liverpool, and which will place my father's extensive collection in a position alike conducive to the gratification of his friends and neighbours, honourable to himself, and on all accounts gratifying to me as his representative.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

DERBY.

The extent and importance of this gift naturally focalized matters, and as there was no question of its refusal, immediate steps were necessary to find a suitable building, and place it as early as possible on public view. The action of the Library and Museum Committee and their proposals in connexion with this gift and the public library are set forth in the following report by the Chairman of the Library and Museum Committee, and presented to the Council on September 9th.

“The Library and Museum Committee have to report to the Council that, in accordance with the resolution of the Council of the 16th July last, your committee proceeded to communicate with the Earl of Derby on the subject of the collections of natural history offered to the Council.

“A deputation from your committee subsequently proceeded to Knowsley, by appointment, to inspect the collection, and to have an interview with Lord Derby. They were received in the kindest and most cordial manner by his Lordship; the whole subject was gone into at considerable length, every desire being manifested on his part

to waive minor points, providing the great objects of the late Earl could be properly secured, that of rendering the collection as extensively available as possible to the public of Liverpool. The mention of the Collegiate Institution in the written memorandum of the late Earl was, it appears, merely suggestive, and was not considered as presenting any impediment to the selection of such a locality as the Council might judge the best fitted for the purpose. In the first instance, the mode of settlement proposed by the noble donor appeared to be, that a certain number of trustees should be selected by himself, a certain number by the Council, a further number by these two bodies jointly, and to this united board of trustees should be given the entire management of the collection, and the disbursement of the funds necessary for its maintenance. The objections to this mode of settlement were pointed out by the deputation; and, after further consideration, the following method was suggested, which met with the approbation of all parties, as being the most likely to secure the permanence of the institution, whilst, at the same time, not interfering with the freedom of action of the Council.

“A board of trustees, principally, if not entirely, official, to be nominated by the Earl of Derby. In the deed of trust, or Act of Parliament, whichever be the mode of settlement adopted, the purposes, rules and regulations under which the collection is to be managed,

are to be defined and set out as clearly and distinctly as possible. The province of the trustees will be, principally, to see that these regulations are duly observed, and that the collection is maintained in its integrity and efficiency. Subject to these provisions, the entire management to be in the Council, who shall appoint and dismiss the officers, fix salaries, pay the current expenses, and provide a suitable building for the reception of the collection.

“When a suitable building is once provided and fitted up, your committee are not of opinion that any very large outlay will be required on the collection. The number of stuffed specimens is about 8,000, and there are in boxes about 7,000 skins ready for stuffing. When the completed specimens are arranged, the work of stuffing and completing the remainder may proceed gradually; nearly the whole expense consisting in the wages of one or two individuals engaged in that department, the salary of a curator, and the expenses of cleaning and repairs.

“The subject of a suitable locality next engaged the attention of your committee. The removal of the difficulties of joint management by the proposed arrangement with the Earl of Derby, naturally suggested the idea of re-opening the negotiations with the Committee of the Royal Institution, which had previously proved abortive through misunderstandings on this point. It was considered that an opportunity was now afforded, which, if allowed to slip, might never occur again, of combining the Derby Collection, the Royal

Institution Museum and Gallery of Art, and the proposed Public Library, into one group, which should be to the public of Liverpool and the north-west of England what the British Museum is to London.

“Your committee have pleasure in reporting that the Committee of the Royal Institution met their advances in the most conciliatory spirit. The proposed arrangement, which is agreed to by the Institution Committee, is the following:— That the entire property of the Institution shall be vested in the Corporation under provisions similar in character to those arranged with the Earl of Derby, and that the management of the Museum and Gallery of Art, and the disbursement of funds, shall be with the Council. It is further proposed that the Corporation shall purchase the school buildings and land connected therewith, so as to place the entire site at the disposal of the Corporation. These schools and land are valued by the Corporation surveyor at £4,000. This site will form an admirable position for the erection, at a future time, of a building for the Derby collection and the public library.

“With respect to the public library, it is in some respects to be regretted that circumstances have so long delayed the promised provision by the Council of a place for its accomodation; but should this delay result in the establishment of an institution on a wider basis, and of more extended usefulness, it would leave no cause for dissatisfaction with those who have contributed towards its formation. The idea of your Committee

is, the ultimate concentration of the Derby Collection and the Public Library along with the present Museum and Gallery of Art on the site in Colquitt street. Considerable time, however, must of necessity elapse before this could be accomplished. The obtaining of an Act of Parliament and the erection of a suitable building, if it were even determined to proceed at once, would be the work of years, whilst immediate accommodation is required for both the Derby Collection and the Free Library. Under these circumstances, your committee are glad to be able to report, that the outlay of a very moderate sum will secure a building every way suitable for both these purposes for some time to come; giving ample time for consideration as to the best mode of combining the whole at a future period, and distributing the expense over a series of years. The building alluded to is the Union News Room in Duke Street and Slater Street, which has been offered to the Council for the sum of £2,500. The premises are large and commodious, having a handsome stone front to Duke Street, and comprising, besides the basement, a large room on the ground floor suitable for the Library, with several rooms above, well calculated for the present reception of the Derby Collection. These premises, if purchased by the Corporation, can, of course be re-sold or leased whenever the collections are removed.

“The above statement comprises, as far as your committee are aware, every subject which has come before them relative to the project before

the Council. They are of the opinion that if the suggestions offered above are sanctioned by the Council, and carried out in their integrity they will have an important and beneficial influence on the moral and intellectual character of the town in future, and they will give an impulse to its educational institutions which is much to be desired, and that both directly and indirectly they will contribute to its progress and prosperity." After a brief estimate of the probable annual cost entailed, the report concludes with the following remarkable words: "No expense for books is included in the estimate for the Library. When the Library is established, an occasional grant might be made for books, at the option of the Council."

After the reading of this report, the following motion was carried unanimously: "That the report be approved; that it be referred to the committee to carry their recommendations into effect; and that they be authorised to give the notices for, and draw up a bill next session, or otherwise prepare trust deeds or other documents necessary."





LIVERPOOL PUBLIC LIBRARY, DUKE STREET.



## CHAPTER IV.

### THE OPENING OF LIVERPOOL'S FIRST FREE LIBRARY.

WITH the purchase of the premises of the Union News Room in Duke Street, the acceptance of Lord Derby's bequest, and the donations of books and money received in response to the appeal made by the Association, of which Mr. T. B. Horsfall was chairman, the Library and Museum may be said to have at last been founded.

It necessarily took some time before the institution could be organised and the Act of Parliament obtained by which funds for its maintenance would be insured, and to comply with the conditions of the gift. Under these improved circumstances it was felt the *raison d'être* of the Association no longer existed. Accordingly on the 27th November, 1851, the members were called together, and a report submitted to them, of which the following is the most material part:—

“The committee beg to draw attention to the fact that the formation of a library was not merely

the primary idea, but the only one which the Town Council entertained in May, 1850, and that the first resolution of this meeting at which this Association was established had reference to that object exclusively. In the printed circular attention was pointedly drawn to this branch of the subject, and the only articles yet entrusted to the committee have been books, though their object was nominally threefold. Further, the Town Council have not only responded to the application of the committee by providing accommodation for the books, and taking charge of them for the present, but they have already anticipated the requirements of the library to be founded by appointing a librarian. In these circumstances the committee do not see that the failure of part of a general scheme should at all interfere with the realisation of the remainder. The Association undertook the formation of a library, and for this it stands pledged to the subscribers and the public. The promotion of a museum and gallery of art they also promised, and they still desire to do so, though the understanding on which that promise was given no longer exists. They feel that in the present position of affairs they are doubly unfortunate. They have to lament that an arrangement which promised to be of great public utility has met with so many unforeseen impediments, and after the negotiations of a year and a half is still in an equivocal position. They are sorry also, that the assumed connexion of the Royal Institution with the Free Public Library has been seriously injurious to the latter,

for the public (calculating naturally on the present existence of a valuable collection) felt that they were subscribing to create a new feature rather than to establish a distinct institution. The committee are, therefore, unusually anxious to interest the public again on behalf of the library, and to secure the adoption of such arrangements as shall tend to its complete establishment and rapid development.

“They, therefore, venture to recommend to the Association that after the recent subscriptions and donations have been advertised, and the accounts passed, the entire donations of money and books, together with the unpaid accounts, be handed over to the Library and Museum Committee of the Town Council for the purposes of the library only.”

The adoption of the report in its integrity was formally moved by Archdeacon Brooks, seconded by Dr. Macintyre, and carried unanimously.

At the suggestion of Mr. Theodore Rathbone, president of the Royal Institution, the chairman promised that the dilapidations in the room recently occupied by the books should be repaired.

A vote of thanks to the chairman was moved by Mr. John Aikin, seconded by Mr. Theodore Rathbone, and carried with applause ; after which it was announced that the functions of the Association had ceased.

Up to this time the negotiations with the Trustees of the Royal Institution had not been finally closed, and there were many who wished in

the interests of the town, that some satisfactory arrangement in regard to the transference of the natural history specimens, and, if necessary, the property of the institution, could be arrived at. To speak in diplomatic phrase, it would appear that various informal *pourparlers* took place, but, as the Town Council declined to ratify the financial part of the scheme, and the Trustees apparently were not prepared to accept anything less, there was little more to be said or done. A special meeting of the proprietors of the Royal Institution was called "to take into consideration and decide as to the adoption of proposals made to the committee by the Town Council for the transfer, on certain conditions and stipulations, of that part of the Royal Institution consisting of the Museum, Gallery of Art, and warehouses, to the Corporation of Liverpool, for gratuitous public use."

The president, Mr. Theodore Rathbone, in his address on the occasion, gave a resumé of the negotiations between the Corporation and the Trustees, and of the agreements which were embodied in the bill introduced in Parliament, which being afterwards modified in some important particulars by the Corporation resulted in the bill being withdrawn. Mr. Samuel Holme, who was present as a proprietor, spoke largely on behalf of the Corporation, and contended that the Trustees overestimated the value of their landed property.

Certain alternative proposals of the proprietors were discussed and adopted at this meeting which,

on being submitted to the Town Council on the 17th December following, were rejected, and so terminated the protracted but abortive negotiations which covered nearly a period of two years. Viewing this end of the matter in the light of the present, it is not too much to say that the result has been eminently satisfactory in all its aspects. With the termination of these proceedings, and on the bill promoted by the Corporation becoming law on the 3rd of May, 1852, the Liverpool Public Library was fairly launched on its career of usefulness. From what has already been said it will be easily seen why a special Act of Parliament was required and how it came to be so much wider and comprehensive than the Public Libraries general act. The rating clause empowered the levying of one penny in the pound on the assessed rental, which insured the new institution a regular income available for books as for other expenses. But of this the Library only received a part, as the Derby Museum, and at this time the Botanic Gardens also, had to be maintained out of it.

The establishment of a public library supported by municipal funds which would annually increase in a degree corresponding to the growth in size and wealth of the town had obviously a destiny of greatness not easy for the mind to limit. To organise such a library at the beginning and systematise its work so that its certain growth and development would be easy and natural, was a task demanding thought and consideration, seeing that the Liverpool Public Library was the second

library established after the passing of Mr. Ewart's Public Libraries Act, and then only six weeks after the first, it had little opportunity to benefit by the experience of others. Much of this work naturally fell upon Mr. John Stuart Dalton, the first librarian. Mr. Dalton was a man of considerable culture and ability, and his mental endowments, united with his zeal and earnestness in the discharge of his duties, largely contributed to secure the early success of the institution and to establish it in public favour. He died in 1868, after sixteen years faithful service.

It was the 18th October, 1852, that the Liverpool Free Public Library first opened its doors to the reading public. The opening function was modest and unpretending. It is evident that this had no sinister augury, for few literary institutions have been more successful in their path of usefulness. The Mayor, Mr. Thomas Littledale, performed the opening ceremony, and there were present many men who, if not eminent in the way of literature, science, or art, were locally notable in promoting the welfare of their fellow townsmen of humbler birth and means. These included: Mr. William Brown, M.P., Mr. Charles Turner, M.P., Mr. J. C. Ewart, the Rev. Dr. Hume, Messrs. J. A. Picton, Samuel Holme, George Holt, John Bigham, J. C. Fernihough, John Stewart, H. Danson, M. J. Whitty, &c.

At half-past ten in the morning of that day, the members of the Town Council assembled in the Town Hall, and with the Mayor at their head,

and accompanied by many magistrates and other gentlemen, walked in procession to the library. The Mayor, on opening the inaugural proceedings, remarked: "It had been said, why provide for the poor a free public library, when so many of them were incapable of availing themselves of its advantages? But is this true? The deficiency that now exists of schools in proportion to the population of this country will, I am sure, be much diminished if secular knowledge is more generally diffused to those who are already capable of reading. The greater use that is made of this acquirement, the more widely will be spread the desire of acquiring it, and thus increasing knowledge will tend of itself to eradicate ignorance. Suppose the case of an artisan who has already made some progress in science and in acquiring general information which has tended so much to his own advantage. It rests now with the people themselves whether they will or will not avail themselves of these advantages. But who can doubt the spirit of the age, the desire of knowledge, which, if rightly directed, tends so much to the benefit of the population generally. Reading is itself the power of getting at the opinions and arguments of others. A good opinion, a sound argument, will in the end prevail; and relying as we do upon the fact that we have the greatest amount of political and personal freedom, that we are governed by the most just laws, we cannot but rejoice that those facts should be made known through this nation to the poorer orders, and thus in some measure counteract the influence of those

seditions and subversive principles which are advocated in some of those publications which are so much read by them, and whose only recommendation is their cheapness. But I am sure that this is but the commencement of a very much larger establishment. I do hope that steps will be taken, or are now being taken, by the Council to have a museum and a library attached which will be a credit to the town, and also a very profitable and just investment of those funds over which they are called upon to preside."

Mr. Picton, after referring to the measures which had been adopted for bringing the library movement in Liverpool to a successful issue, said: "The task lying before us is a noble and a splendid one. There is ignorance which requires enlightening; there is the thirst of the craving soul which requires to be slaked at the fount of wisdom; there are myriads of inquiring minds looking up for direction. All this we have in our power to do. The time, I trust, is fast passing away when the operative classes look upon those above them with distrust and suspicion. Let us take away all ground for this, we have the key of knowledge, and this day we have thrown open its doors that all may enter and partake. Here every man, be his condition what it may, can commune freely with the mighty spirits of the past. The building in which we stand was the best suited for the purpose of any which could be procured, and the most has been made of the site by enlarging it to the utmost extent which the ground would admit of; but we are even now sorely straitened for



room. The 10,000 volumes already in our possession, as may be seen, nearly fill the whole of our space, and the accommodation for readers, though convenient, is not very extensive. The new part of the building is appropriated entirely to the Derby Museum and the Liverpool model, for which there is nothing like the room requisite for their proper display. The series of articles imported into Liverpool, which attracted so much attention at the Great Exhibition, are lying unopened in the cases for want of room to display them. We are, in fact, suffering under a plethora of wealth for which we cannot find space. It may be said, why not adopt a bold stroke, and build a magnificent museum at once? This cannot and ought not to be done without grave and serious consideration. Let it first be seen that the public of Liverpool really value the boon offered and are disposed to make use of it. If they do so, if they take pride in it, and support the Council in their views, depend upon it the time is not far distant when Liverpool will be as much distinguished for her facilities in the study of science and art as she is now for her facilities of commerce."

Then followed a speech from one who from the first had evinced great interest in the library, and was subsequently to manifest that interest in a very practical and acceptable manner. This was Mr. William Brown, M.P., who said "he hoped that the shelves of the library would be stored with valuable volumes, and that the public would have greater access to them than they now had. There was no doubt that it was our duty to acquire

knowledge on every subject to enable us to carry out that which would be advantageous to our countrymen. He desired to offer his sincere congratulations upon the progress which had been made. In days gone by, knowledge was limited to the wealthy and the few. Now, happily, we were in a different position. He was glad to see the rivalry between Liverpool and Manchester. It was honourable to both. It was that honourable competition that was able to benefit, not only this, but other institutions. Liverpool, fortunately, had rather the advantage of Manchester in possessing the magnificent collection left by the late Earl of Derby, and he hoped the Corporation would contribute to provide a fitting depository for that noble collection of specimens of natural history. The possession of the knowledge which those volumes contained would enable us to maintain our position. He hoped it would do more. He hoped it would enable us to advance in morals and intelligence; and although in the first instance, the information might probably be confined to those who were possessed of the ability to read and write, we knew perfectly well that knowledge extended to those immediately below us; and we knew also that those who were in higher stations received instruction from those who were in a more humble position. Many of the most magnificent manufactories in this country were the work of respectable but humble mechanics, who employed their science to contribute to the wants of mankind, and we did not seem to have made a pause in our career at all, for the last half

century had been more productive of improvements than centuries before. When we looked at what science had done for us—at our railroads, our steam engines, our electric telegraphs, and other inventions which were contributing so much to our wants; and last, though not least, when we looked at the right we enjoyed of assembling to discuss our own affairs, we saw ourselves in the possession of those advantages which would enable us to maintain the position in which we stood. He wished every success to the library which was that day opened.”

Mr. Thornely, M.P., expressed himself regarding the urgent desirability of providing books for home reading. He said: “I would take the liberty to suggest to the committee for their consideration the great importance, at an early period, of adding a lending library to the library and reading room. He did not speak without great experience upon this subject, for it must be some twenty or thirty years since that excellent man, Egerton Smith, assisted by a number of gentlemen of this town, solicited the Mayor of that day, to call a public meeting to sanction what was called a ‘Mechanics’ and Apprentices’ Library.’ He thought it was in the mayoralty of Mr. Charles Lawrence, when that meeting was held in the Town Hall. He was not sure that the Town Council granted any money, but they cordially gave their sanction to the establishment of a Mechanics’ and Apprentices’ Library. He had the honour one year to be President of the Institution, and for several years he was a member of the

committee. They collected, chiefly by voluntary contributions, such a library that they were enabled to have 800 readers who took the books home for one week from the library. He would have the committee consider the desirability of establishing a lending library, so that young men employed in counting houses, warehouses, shops, or elsewhere, and who could not spare time to read at the Institution, might take books home with them for a week or two."

Dr. Hume, who next offered some observations, was one of the first and the most active promoters of such an institution as was now offered for the public benefit. He remarked that "Liverpool has long been celebrated for her physical greatness, her massive and spacious docks, and her public edifices. To-day she declares she will be intellectual also; but this is only the beginning, and not the end; it is only the first round in the ladder of social progress. Allusion has been made to the subject of a lending library, without which this work will only be half done. We shall legislate only for certain classes of the community, for the mechanic, who is one of the classes that we are most desirous to raise, is engaged by day in his usual employments. If we cannot bring the mountain to Mahomet, however, we can bring Mahomet to the mountain; if the mechanic cannot come here to read, we may be able to lay suitable books on the table of his cottage. To this subject I understand the committee have already given their attention, and no doubt their arrangements will be good. I hope it will be permitted to one

who has some experience of books to give a word of advice respecting the mode of reading. Most people read a book as they play a game of chess, or chat, or take a glass of wine with a friend, merely to pass the vacant hour. But I like to see a man read as the South Sea islander plants his bread-fruit tree, that himself and his children may sit beneath its shade, and eat the fruit that hangs from its branches."

## CHAPTER V.

### BRANCH LENDING LIBRARIES ESTABLISHED.

THE total number of volumes on the shelves at the time of opening the library numbered some 10,000. This was a reasonable number to start with, but unfortunately many of the books received as gifts were not, in regard to date and edition, such as to do honour to a reference library. The success of the library was immediate. The attendances grew in number almost daily; and it was not long before the question of additional accommodation for readers and books forced itself on the attention of the committee. The first year's report on the work of the library, fully justified the hopes and expectations entertained by its friends. The number of volumes issued was 111,723, apart from a large issue of periodicals. Of the character of these books the report says: "Works of amusement form about one-half of all the books read. Far from regretting this result, the committee feel it their duty to render this portion of the library more attractive still, being of opinion that the love of reading in any form must tend to counteract the propensity to low and degrading pursuits, and that in order to inspire a thirst for knowledge, the first step is to cultivate a taste for reading in some direction. History, general literature, voyages and travels,

and poetry, have been next in demand. The number of theological and philosophical works consulted being about 80 per week, or 4,071 during the year, is somewhat remarkable, and indicates a higher class of general reading than might at first sight be expected."

It has already been intimated how important public libraries may become as centres to which all literary and illustrative matter of their particular districts should gravitate. In Liverpool the impetus to this work came with the offer, by the executors of the late Thomas Binns, of his great collection of maps, drawings, and engravings, illustrative of the history of the County of Lancaster; and more especially of the town of Liverpool. They are the outcome of leisure hour searching and collecting, during a period of forty years, and a repertory of illustrations of the past history of the locality. To estimate their value now is impossible, so rare and difficult to obtain are the majority of the items here brought together. This collection occupying some twenty-six large folio volumes is the nucleus round which has gathered some thousands of other illustrations and original drawings. Here in the library lives, in a way that cannot fail to delight the local antiquarian, the Liverpool which has passed away to make room for a Liverpool of wide spacious streets and palatial buildings. Here too the local historian has his tastes gratified and wants supplied in the books, pamphlets, play-bills, and broadsides, the collecting of which begun fifty years ago and is carried on now with no less zeal and industry, if with less reward. The work

of Liverpool in this direction has given a lead to other public libraries with a result that probably all without exception, as far as their means will allow, are securing similar materials for local history.

Great as were the advantages afforded by the Reference Library and its public reading room, it was felt that a wider field of usefulness would be entered upon if books could be borrowed for reading and study at home. The distance of the library from many homes, the time occupied in going and coming, and the drawbacks to thoughtful perusal in a crowded room, supplied convincing arguments in favour of lending libraries. Very soon the pressure of public opinion on the committee was such that in deference to it, two branch lending libraries were established tentatively in 1853 in the north and south Corporation schools, and opened on the 18th October and 1st November respectively. Each commenced with a thousand volumes and was open, for the issue and return of books, two evenings in the week from 7 to 9 p.m. This was obviously a day of small things, yet these two branches were the embryos out of which evolved the Everton and Toxteth libraries as we have them to-day. As these two branch libraries were started largely in the nature of an experiment and only open in the evenings, it was thought sufficient to engage two of the assistant masters of the schools to act as librarians; with these were associated two youths, one of whom is now chief librarian and will shortly enter upon his jubilee year of service.



It soon became apparent that the branch lending libraries had come to stay, and that they had an important future. The Libraries Committee accordingly considered it desirable to place their direction and administration in the hands of a man experienced in library work, who should be responsible directly to them for their efficient management. After due inquiry, the committee's choice fell upon Mr. R. W. Roulston, an assistant librarian in the Liverpool Lyceum Library. In this capacity Mr. Roulston had made himself conspicuous for courtesy and attention, and these qualities, added to his wide knowledge of books, insured his election for the office.

The popularity of the lending libraries developed very rapidly, so much so, that at the end of twelve months each library had nearly a thousand readers. As a consequence of this, more suitable premises than the school rooms had to be obtained, where readers and books (which latter had now more than doubled) could be better accommodated. The house, 6, Hardy Street, was rented, and arrangements made for giving a daily attendance both morning and evening for the issue and return of books. This gave such satisfaction that a similar course was pursued in connection with the North Library, which was removed to Great Nelson Street some eighteen months later.

As illustrating the application and studious character of many of the working men readers who availed themselves of the advantages of these lending libraries, the following extract

from the second annual report issued by the Library Committee is interesting, and a pleasing confirmation of the educational value claimed for them by those who advocated their establishment.

“A labouring man in the north district has read since the library opened, Gibbon’s ‘Rome,’ ‘Universal History,’ Macaulay’s ‘England,’ and is now going through Lingard, as he says he wishes to know both sides of the question. Another in the same district has read Macaulay, the ‘Universal History,’ and is now reading Alison. At the south, two working men have read Moore’s and Scott’s ‘Poetical Works,’ and one Byron. Another has read Rollin’s ‘Ancient History,’ and is at present going through Alison; while a poor man at the extremity of Toxteth Park has, ever since the library opened, been reading the *Mirror*, he has now reached the 33rd volume.”

The character of the reading in the early history of the library was altogether gratifying; the above instances of persistent high-class reading being by no means exceptional. It is often stated that statistics are fallacious; and though biological treatises were in frequent request, it must be admitted that if the number of issues of a certain book on local botany were to be accepted as a correct indication of the interest manifested in this particular science, then statistics would be misleading indeed. The title of the work in question gave rise to some misconception. In the first printed catalogue, or rather list, for it was too primitive in construction to merit the more

dignified title—the *Flora of Liverpool*, by T. B. Hall, was recorded; and how many times this book was asked for and obtained in the belief that the *Flora* was a Liverpool ship with a deeply interesting history, it is impossible to say; but the writer of these annals can certainly vouch that the book was not unfrequently borrowed under this impression.

The increased facilities for obtaining books for home reading only served to attract other borrowers in still greater numbers, which in turn served to justify the Libraries Committee in adding largely to the number of books already provided. The result soon followed: totally inadequate accommodation, and much inconvenience and annoyance. The grievances of the readers of the South Branch were first redressed, by the purchase of two large houses, 3 and 5 Upper Parliament Street, which were adapted as well as possible to the requirements of a library, and opened for business in 1855. Here the library remained until 15th October, 1902, when like a butterfly emerged from its chrysalis, it assumed a form which, by comparison, was altogether unrecognisable, and entered upon an extended and more varied field of usefulness.

The pressing needs of the North Branch were next attended to, by the erection of a large room on vacant land adjoining the premises occupied in Great Nelson Street. Here the library remained until it became almost isolated by the drifting away of the residential population to the suburbs of the city. On the erection of the handsome and

commodious library and reading rooms in Everton, the premises in Great Nelson Street were closed, and the old North Library, under a new name, entered upon a larger and more vigorous educational work.

The expectations of the committee in appointing Mr. Roulston as superintendent of the lending libraries did not prove delusive, two altogether new departures in free library work were made on his initiative, by the circulation of books for the blind, commenced in 1857, and the circulation of music began in 1859. The lending out of books for the blind was altogether a happy thought, for who can tell how many solitary and weary hours since then, in the lives of those who have been deprived of that dearest of all senses, have been lightened and made cheerful through the pleasure of reading. The books in Moon's or Braille characters in the library now amount to nearly a thousand, very many of them being the gift of Miss Mary L. Hornby, whose generosity and quiet philanthropic labours in the interests of the blind deserve wider recognition.

The pleasure and refining influence of music scarcely needs to be asserted. But in 1859, it was a new thing for free libraries to make the circulation of music part of their work. In this, as in the lending of books for the blind, it is pleasing to record that Liverpool gave a lead which has not been without its influence in other places. The large amount of standard music—the compositions of the great masters—provided in both of the lending branches; but more particularly

in the Reference Library is much used and appreciated, and the valuable aid in its selection given by the late Mr. Best, organist of St. George's Hall, and later by Dr. Peace, his successor, deserves to be thankfully recorded. The great collected edition of the compositions of Handel, published by the German Handel Society, the Purcell Society publications, the fine score editions of Beethoven, Mozart, Mendelssohn, Chopin, and Palestrina, published by Breitkopf and Hartell, besides the no less splendid edition of Bach's works issued by Bach Society of Leipsig, and the compositions and arrangements for the organ by Mr. W. T. Best, give some idea of the importance and value of the collection of music available to musical students, though none in regard to its extent. For the amateur and the average player upon the piano, and the vocalist, the light operas and operettas are not wanting. Many amusing stories are related (most of them fictitious) of the jumble the more illiterate readers make of book titles. My own many years of experience, however, have not enabled me to record many such as we read about. But, occasionally, one is provoked into a smile by some work we are asked to supply. A short time ago one of my assistants was somewhat startled by a young woman asking in a quiet simple way, and without the slightest idea of the incongruity of the request, for "The Gaiety Girl" or "The Messiah."

## CHAPTER VI.

A NEW REFERENCE LIBRARY AND MUSEUM BUILDING  
OFFERED BY MR. WILLIAM BROWN.

TO return to the Reference Library. Every day demonstrated more and more the utter inadequacy of the accommodation provided for readers and books. For the storage of the latter, first one adjoining house and then another was rented and fitted up with shelving. But it does not require a person to be experienced in library administration to perceive that this sort of labyrinthine accommodation in a popular and fast developing institution could be of a permanent character. The difficulty of finding increased accommodation for readers was much greater. Several efforts in this direction did not improve matters to any appreciable extent, for no amount of ingenuity could obtain the required space. The energy of the committee, and particularly of its chairman, did much to secure the only remedy that was possible—an entirely new building specially designed for the purposes of a library and museum. How long this desideratum would have remained unaccomplished it is difficult to say, had not a



SHAW'S BROW.  
Now William Brown Street.





sort of lever been applied by an offer of £6,000 from Mr. William Brown towards the desired object. It was hoped that other donors would contribute in a like manner, and the Corporation by a substantial donation. This they did by a vote of £10,000 towards the building. In the meanwhile the question of site engaged the attention of the committee and of the Town Council. This attention gradually focussed itself on the north side of Shaw's Brow (now William Brown Street) as being the place most suitable for a large municipal institution, and this site was ultimately selected.

The question of site having been definitely decided, the Council, with commendable promptitude, proceeded to obtain legal authority for acquiring the necessary land, by the insertion of a clause in the Improvement Act which they were then promoting in Parliament, by which the Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses of the Borough of Liverpool obtained power to "appropriate for the purposes of a Free Public Library, part of three streets in the said Borough called respectively Mill Lane, Mill Place, and Shaw's Brow." This Act received the Royal Assent on the 16th July, 1855. Though much could be said in favour of this site, it was not all that could be desired owing to the rapid inclination of its surface. At this time the Council, and the town generally, were agitated by the question of a high level bridge from the top of Shaw's Brow into Dale Street, and spanning the line of Byrom Street. This bridge was never completed in its entirety, though

the terrace or platform in front of the library, just recently removed, formed part of the scheme. With no less commendable zeal the Council next advertised for drawings and plans for the proposed building. The highest premiated plans were those of Mr. Thomas Allom. Their selection gave rise to much discussion, as it was very obvious that the building as designed could not be erected for £26,000, the amount the Council had decided to expend. On this account, and for other reasons, further delay ensued. Mr. Brown was most anxious to see the library erected during his lifetime, and this, no doubt, materially influenced his decision, when on December 31st, 1856, he addressed the following letter to the Mayor:—

MY DEAR SIR,—I have been long desirous that Liverpool should have a free public library and museum worthy of the town, where the inhabitants, be their position in life what it may, can resort for intellectual improvement; and, as some of my relatives and friends have expressed a wish that I should build one and present it to my fellow townsmen, I am prepared to do so on the site provided by the Corporation. I have no wish to interfere with the resolution the Council have already come to, of leaving the plans in the hands of the Corporation Surveyor. Probably it will not be unreasonable for me to hope and expect that, in some way or other, my name will be connected with it, to show that I have endeavoured to be useful in my generation; and possibly it may encourage others who have the means to contribute to useful public works, and that some of my family or executors may be continued on the Managing Committee.

Ever yours respectfully,

WILLIAM BROWN.

The elevation and plans of Mr. Thomas Allom were adopted by Mr. Brown, with modifications made by Mr. Weightman, Architect and Surveyor to the Corporation. On the 15th of April, 1857, the foundation stone was laid. The proceedings of the day were inaugurated at 10-30 a.m. by a meeting of gentlemen in the Town Hall under the presidency of the Deputy Mayor, Alderman Samuel Holme. Addresses were presented to Mr. William Brown from the Literary and Philosophical Society, Philomatic Society, Historic Society, and various other societies and institutions to the number of thirteen. That the day was regarded as auspicious may be reasonably inferred from the number of those who attended laying the foundation stone, the banquet, or the soirée, in order to do honour to the generous donor and the occasion. Among the more illustrious present at one or other of these functions, in addition to Mr. William Brown, M.P., and the deputy Mayor, were the Right Hon. Lord Stanley (afterwards 15th Earl of Derby), Sir John Pakington, M.P. (afterwards 1st Baron Hampton), Mr. William Rathbone, the Bishop of Chester (Right Rev. J. Graham), Major-General Sir Edward Cust, Bart., the Earl of Shrewsbury and Talbot, Mr. Joseph Mayer, Mr. Monckton Milnes, M.P. (afterwards 1st Baron Houghton), Lieut.-General Sir Harry Smith (after whom Harrismith, South Africa, was called), Mr. Nathaniel Hawthorne, Mr. William Ewart, M.P., the Rev. Dr. Raffles, the Rev. Dr. Hume, the Rev. Hugh Stowell Brown, Mr. S. R. Graves, Archdeacon Jones, Mr. J. A. Picton,

Dr. W. Ihne, Mr. J. C. Ewart, M.P., Mr. J. A. Tobin, the Rev. C. M. Birrell, Rector Campbell, Mr. T. B. Horsfall, M.P., Sir J. P. Kay Shuttleworth, the Rev. J. H. Howson (afterwards Dean of Chester), the Rev. J. Martineau, the Rev. James Nugent (now Monsignor Nugent), the Rev. W. H. Channing, the Rev. T. Binney, Mr. Thomas Avison, Mr. Christopher Bushell, Mr. George Holt, Mr. Thomas Inman, and others.

After the presentation of addresses, which Mr. Brown acknowledged with expressions of warm appreciation, a procession was formed which proceeded through crowds of spectators to the site of the Brown Library, where, at 12 o'clock, Alderman Holme, Deputy Mayor, invited Mr. William Brown to lay the foundation stone. On presenting trowel and mallet to Mr. Brown, and after adverting to the insufficient accommodation for library and museum in Duke Street, and paying personal tribute to Mr. Brown, Alderman Holme said, "And now, sir, like those princely merchants of Italy who raised their cities into powerful republics, you are shewing to England that the pursuits of commerce are not incompatible with fostering the arts and sciences and with protecting and extending literature; and like them you are about to erect a building which will perpetuate your name. We live in an age of progress. Education is spreading her pinions, and civilisation is marching with rapid strides in the footsteps of science and mechanics through the whole globe. We must remember that other nations are progressing as well as ours, and, therefore, if we are to keep pace in the march

which now seems to be extending itself over Europe and over a large portion of America, our artizans must individually be taught, because, just as the mountain is composed of atoms and the ocean of drops, so an educated people, a mass of educated mechanics, will have a much better chance in the great race of competition which is taking place, than if we suffer them to remain in ignorance." He then read the inscription upon the stone :

This stone of a building of the Free Public Library and Museum of the Borough of Liverpool was set on the 15th of April, 1857, by William Brown, Esq., M.P. for South Lancashire, at whose sole cost the building was erected and by him presented as a free gift to his fellow-townsmen.

FRANCIS SHAND, Esq., *Mayor.*

J. A. PICTON, *Chairman of the Library and Museum Committee.*

JOHN WEIGHTMAN, *Surveyor to the Corporation, Architect.*

WILLIAM SHUTTLEWORTH, *Town Clerk.*

Mr. William Brown in responding said: "It has long been the conviction of my mind that to place within the reach of our fellow townsmen, a Free Library and Museum, where they will have sufficient space and comfortably warmed and ventilated apartments to resort to, to read and pursue their studies, will be a great inducement for many to come here and spend their time profitably, in place of wasting hours of listlessness or possibly something worse. It is evident that there is a growing taste and anxiety on the part of the public to avail themselves of opportunities to acquire knowledge and cultivate their minds, at which I sincerely rejoice. And it is the duty of

us all to promote this good feeling as much as lies in our power. Here they will meet with the accumulated intelligence of ages, and which, I hope, will be eagerly sought after by many. And no one can doubt this who visits the library in Duke Street, and sees its crowded state, the parties who attend there, and the class of books that is asked for. It is only the want of time and opportunity in having access to those silent friends—well chosen books and museums—which prevent, in many cases, valuable talent being developed that lies dormant and lost for ever to the world. We owe a debt of gratitude to men of science and of letters, when we consider the time and treasure they have spent in solving problems, trying experiments, making discoveries, and perfecting machinery. We ought to hold them in the highest estimation as the benefactors of mankind; and must regret that from want of access to public libraries to ascertain what was done by others, they had sometimes to go over the same ground to arrive at the same result, and lost both their time and their labour, which was a great discouragement to further advances. Hence the more we can facilitate the researches of such men, the more we contribute to the general good of Great Britain and throughout the world. Look at the history of many of our great and distinguished men, who have become so in spite of the difficulties they had to encounter. Let us remove those difficulties as far as we possibly can, and aid the work of progress. It will not be questioned that knowledge makes us more reflecting beings—

enables us better to appreciate the value of the constitution under which we live, and the many advantages that we enjoy, and be less liable to those unfortunate and ill-judged ebullitions of public opinion which generally add to that distress which it was intended to alleviate. I have great faith in free libraries, freedom of expression, and a free press—which we pre-eminently enjoy—being the best guarantees for our liberty, and for our onward progress as a nation in virtue and in knowledge.”

Lord Stanley offered congratulations to the town “on having added a building which will be among the chief ornaments even of this town of Liverpool,” and on having thus increased educational appliances and means of instruction “by the creation of an institution which will go far to place Liverpool as high intellectually as it stands commercially.”

In the course of Mr. William Ewart’s remarks, he said: “I am a fellow townsman of you all. I therefore feel a deep interest on this occasion, and I may be permitted to add I feel a deeper interest because I was anxious many years ago to introduce free libraries, and I rejoice to find they are introduced. *Liverpool stands, I am delighted to say, first in the foundation of these institutions.* I only left London six weeks ago, and I had the honour to assist at the foundation at the first free library formed in London. I mean the Free Public Library for the City of Westminster. The people of Westminster set the first example to the inhabitants of London, but I rejoice that *Liverpool stands foremost on this great intellectual occasion.*”

After appreciative remarks from Sir John Pakington, General Sir Harry Smith, and Mr. J. C. Ewart, M.P., the proceedings terminated.

The most prominent feature of the day's proceedings was the grand banquet during the afternoon in St George's Hall. About 800 persons assembled, and Alderman Holme, deputy Mayor, again presided. There were various toasts, followed by speeches from Alderman Holme, Mr. Brown, the Bishop of Chester, Lord Stanley, the Earl of Shrewsbury and Talbot, Mr. Monckton Milnes, M.P., Mr. T. B. Horsfall, M.P., Mr. J. C. Ewart, M.P., Mr. William Ewart, M.P., Rector Campbell, General Sir Harry Smith, Sir John Pakington, M.P., Mr. J. A. Picton, Mr. Nathaniel Hawthorne, and others.

The Bishop of Chester, in response to the toast of "The Bishop and Clergy of the Diocese of Liverpool," observed: "A public library has become a public want in Liverpool. I am glad it has. It is the necessary and the happy result of the progress education has made in our day among the people. I know very well that the education of our people falls very far short of the point which we could wish to reach, and many men, eminent by their public stations, are now turning their minds to devise, if possible, some practicable plan of extending the benefits of education far wider than they yet have been. Let the defects of our education be what they may, I may say this, that even in my own memory education has made great advances in this country, great advances in almost all classes, but I am going to mention only one; I



speak of the class of superior artisans, mechanics, and working men. The persons who compose these classes are now most of them well instructed in the elementary parts of learning, and they are naturally eager to increase their stock of knowledge. There has been an intellectual appetite, an intellectual taste, created in them, and it seeks intellectual food. There has, in fact, been a new class added to the reading public of this country. But the class I am speaking of—the persons composing that class—they are not in a condition to form libraries of books for themselves at home. God be thanked, every one of them can have at home, and his own, one book worth all the books, and more than all the books, in the world besides. He can have his Bible at his home to call his own, and to bless and sanctify his family, and all it contains; but for other books, if he is to have access to them, he must depend upon public libraries for the supply—libraries where men of his class can go and read, or where they can go and borrow books to take home, either upon the payment of a small sum, or without any payment at all, as will be the case with your free library here, for it is to be freely open to all who are to benefit by its advantages.”

Nathaniel Hawthorne, in a felicitous speech, said: “In appearing in this hall I do so as the representative of my country and especially as the representative of the literature of America. There is nothing in literary reputation so dear to an American as the idea that he may not be wholly unknown in the land of his ancestry, that if he

comes hither he comes not entirely as a stranger. I must not forget that I speak not merely on my own behalf but on behalf of the literature of my country. I may be as modest as I please on my own behalf, as modest as befits me to be, but on behalf of the literary men, my brethren, whom my country has produced—the poets, the novelists, the historians of America—I have no right to decline any praise which may be awarded to them. The circumstances of our new country have directed much of our abilities to the active pursuits of life, instead of softening them down into the meditative and studious habits which are favourable to literary productions : but it gives me heartfelt happiness to think that we have returned something of the great debt that we owe to England—that my countrymen have given some evidence that the high standard of Anglo-Saxon intellect has not degenerated in them—they have kept it up to the point, or perhaps not wholly to the point, but that they have at least shown that they come from the same stock as the great writers of the past, as the great writers of the present day who hold the same standard up to us. It gives me great happiness to believe this, because the more we return to you for the great measure of enjoyment we have received from you, the more do we increase the basis of natural sympathy, the high ground of mutual goodwill upon which two such nations may meet. Every American who has written a book which Englishmen are contented to receive into their literature has contributed something towards that end.”

In the evening a soirée took place in the Concert Hall, Lord Nelson Street, under the auspices of the Evening Concert Committee. Mr. Nathaniel Caine presided. Addresses were presented to Mr. Brown from the readers of the Free Libraries and the inhabitants of St. Anne's Ward. In supporting the tributes to Mr. Brown, the Rev. Hugh Stowell Brown, the Rev. J. W. Twist, the Rev. T. Binney, the Rev. W. H. Channing, the Rev. Father Nugent, Mr. J. A. Picton, and others spoke.

The Rev. Hugh Stowell Brown, in a characteristic speech said: "Considering the state of the people, their wishes and their wants, considering the character of the age in which it is our privilege to live, I do not think that benevolence could elsewhere have found a wiser, a safer, a more truly beneficial channel than that which has been elected by our princely-hearted fellow-townsmen. And now, who does not see a glorious prospect opening before the working men of Liverpool? For, notwithstanding all that grandeur which has characterised a portion of the day's proceedings, I for one cannot forget that this library is intended chiefly for the service of those who cannot afford to buy many books, who cannot afford to pay the subscriptions which such an excellent institution as the Liverpool Library, for instance, requires for its support; and although the free library is intended for the benefit of all, yet I take it that it is intended specially for the working people, men of all trades—these, I take it, are the people for whom the library is designed; and I cannot but

look forward to great and glorious results arising from the institution which has been founded to-day. I think we may expect, and are fully justified in expecting, great and happy results from the opportunities for mental improvement afforded by our public library. The public library does afford the workman a relief from the dulness and monotony of his task. I believe that heretofore hundreds of working men resorted to the public houses because they had no other opportunity of shaking off the weariness of seven days' work. But there will be no such excuse now that a healthy and real beneficial excitement is provided. By perusing the books in the library, the working man can obtain for nothing, a relief a thousand times preferable to that which he seeks at such a cost in other places. In establishing such an institution you open out to the working man an inexhaustible fountain of the most refined and most refining pleasure. The people, the working people of this town, are now furnished with such an institution as will, under the blessings of Divine Providence, promote their social happiness, yield them pleasure of the most exalted character, and withdraw them from the debasing scenes in which too many spend their leisure hours. Further, this institution will tend to induce thoughtful habits, economy, prudence, with all the power which must ensue."

The Rev. T. Binney said "in London they had nothing of the sort that we had here in Liverpool; they had no meetings of the working classes like that for objects which had brought

that company together attended with anything like the enthusiasm and excitement which he witnessed amongst them in that hall. In London they had no free library, and they had no man coming forward with £30,000. He attended a meeting at the Mansion House; he went to it with great anxiety and very favourable to the object, wishing to promote it as far as he could. It was a meeting called a year or two ago for the purpose of considering whether a free library should not be established in London, and it went off upon the argument which was brought forward and urged, that perhaps it might lead to a rate of a farthing in the pound, or some argument of that kind, for it was a pecuniary argument upon which the whole thing turned, and he really came away somewhat humbled that that should be the upshot of a meeting called for such purposes—that their arguments should take such a turn as that, and reason downwards to the fine point of a farthing. The fact was, however, that London was far too large for a single movement, and the only way to go to work would be to divide it into separate districts, and have free libraries for particular localities. He hoped something of that kind would soon be done, and he thought if many of the leading men of London—the merchant princes of London, who had the intellectual and moral power and purse power—if they had been in Liverpool that day, and had been operated upon and influenced by what they had seen and heard as he had been, they would have gone home and would have determined that

London should not be long without having separate localities, and free libraries in those localities."

Rev. W. H. Channing said "it struck him as very felicitous—he did not believe Mr. Picton knew it—that the corner stone of the new building was in the south-west corner. Did they see what that meant? It was the corner that laid nearest to the other world. Therefore, he saw in that a very beautiful pledge that it was a new bond of union, from which they would learn that these people were one in God's privileges, and not all the agencies of the world should sever it. In the corner stone which they had laid that day they had placed the coins of this realm, stamped every one with the head of that honoured woman whose name was greeted in America with as hearty cordiality as it was here. He could not but think that if at any period a time should come to pass that a great sorrow should fall upon Great Britain—perhaps by the breaking out of subterranean fires, perhaps by foreign invasion, or whatever might be the cause—when in centuries to come that corner stone should be lifted it would contain the memorials of the head of a free, a united, a happy, and an intelligent and prosperous people. They would have that purity of symbol, a reality which was a living reality; and he would trust that the institution which they were founding that day would be one of the means of perpetuating this prosperity to ages. One single word in conclusion with regard to the institution which they had been founding. In Liverpool they had

many controversies and discussions in regard to the institutions since he came here. There had been many in regard to the supply of this city with water; but in the river of water which they now from that fountain opened, and which was to carry its refreshment into every heart and every home there, he believed there would be no discussion and no controversy there with regard to the quality and in regard to the purity of that water at any rate. Well, since his arrival here there had been great controversies here sometimes with regard to the quality and with regard to the quantity of our gas. Now, he was very sure that every one who read in that library, and every one who took a book from that library, which he hoped would be the next step in the process, would light up a new and improved light, the quantity and quality of which would never be discussed."

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE BROWN LIBRARY COMPLETED AND OPENED.

THE foundation stone having been laid, the work of erection was at once begun and accelerated as much as possible. In the meanwhile the library in Duke Street pursued the even tenor of its way, growing more and more in public favour and daily demonstrating its utility until the completion and occupation of its new palatial home, when additional life and vigour was infused into its work, and the scope of its usefulness greatly enlarged. It was felt by all that the occasion was a memorable one in local annals and that Mr. Brown's munificent gift to his townsmen was worthy of the fullest recognition by all classes of society. That the town was fully sensible of this was evidenced by the fact that the inaugural ceremonies extended over three days. They commenced on the evening of the 17th October, 1860, by an enthusiastic and numerous attended meeting of working men in the Royal Amphitheatre, presided over by the Mayor (Thomas D. Anderson). Among the distinguished persons present were Lord Brougham, Sir John Bowring, Hon. Algernon Egerton, Mr. William Brown, Mr. William Rathbone and Mr. Thomas B. Horsfall, M.P. Mr. Horsfall, after a speech full of wisdom and kindly advice, concluded by moving the following resolution: "That the meeting desires





SIR WILLIAM BROWN, Bart, M.P.



to express its gratitude to Mr. William Brown for his munificent gift of a building for a free public library and museum, and congratulates him on being present in health and happiness at the commencement of the opening ceremonies." This was seconded by Mr. Rathbone in terms of warmth and feeling. The principal event of the evening was the presentation of an address to Mr. William Brown from the working men of Liverpool, together with a clock and a silver salver, on the latter was engraved the following inscription: — "This testimonial, the result of a small subscription collected by the working men of Liverpool, was presented to William Brown, Esq., on the occasion of the opening of the Free Library, as an earnest record of their grateful and sincere appreciation of his magnificent gift to the town to which they belong." A working man, Mr. Daniel Guile, in a speech highly appreciated, concluded by saying: "But, my working friends, before we can attain the utmost amount of good derivable from this institution we have a great deal to learn. Self-denial must be exercised. The power of the mind must gain a complete victory over sensual appetites. Our leisure hours, instead of being spent in the taproom, the singing room and the dancing room, must be given to study, to thought, to perseverance and to industry; and with these aids, and the aid of knowledge, which now is placed within our reach, what shall hinder us from becoming the envy of surrounding nations and the pride of the world? Now, generous sir, I believe I shall be doing wrong to encroach any further

upon the time of this meeting, but I must say that there is nothing we can wish more profoundly, nothing that we can desire more earnestly, than that God may be pleased for many long years to spare the life of the donor, that he may witness in his own days the full fruition of his noble efforts to do us good ; and, my working friends, to-night let me beg of you to show the classes that move above us, as it is generally termed, to show our fellow men, that we can, that we do, that we will appreciate this great gift ; and then I am assured our friend William Brown will feel that the ultimate of his wishes is accomplished."

Mr. Brown, on rising, was received with enthusiastic cheering, which was again and again repeated. His words, eloquent in good council and hope of the good fruit to be borne by his gift, were listened to with deference and appreciation. Lord Brougham, Sir John Bowring, and others addressed the audience, and gave of their wide experience and reading.

Lord Brougham said: "I could not resist being present at a meeting held in honour of my most esteemed friend, your munificent—not only benevolent, but munificent—fellow townsman, for without that wisdom and good sense, and discretion which have directed his great munificence, his generosity, unexampled as it is, would not produce the effect which Providence designed it to have ; but I consider that this is unexampled in the history of human munificence, not only in the amount, but in the perfect judgment, the true wisdom which has directed

Mr. Brown's generosity. He has founded that which is of inestimable benefit to the working classes, not only, as has been said by those who have preceded me, a library and museum—a library to contain the stores of ancient and modern knowledge—knowledge on all subjects which are most desirable to be considered and studied, not only by working men, but by all men—but a museum connected with it, wherein those studies may be improved by books and specimens of the works of the Creator, as shown in the preserved monuments of His bounty, wisdom and skill. But there is added a reading room connected with this library and museum, in which men may obtain the inestimable benefits of social intercourse, of conversations upon the subjects upon which they have been reading, and upon the subjects of the day which most interest them. I observed before leaving home that my friend the Bishop of Oxford has lately been presiding at the opening of a library and reading room in Oxford, and that he sets forth strongly and justly the benefits of the reading room as hardly less than those of the library itself. For, as he justly observes, reading without reflection signifies little, and you have a good security for reflection and for having understood what you have read by freely and unceremoniously conversing upon it with those who have also studied and also read. It has justly been observed by Mr. Horsfall, in setting forth the services of working men, that there is George Stephenson, to whom we owe the great advantage of railway travelling. I could have wished that he had also

noted another working man to whom the railway carriage is not less indebted, for without the steam engine it would stand still. Watt was a working man as well as George Stephenson, only that whilst the one was a workman in a colliery the other was a skilful artisan—skilled in preparing and adjusting machinery; and being a working machinist, he was induced to study the defects of the steam engine and triumphantly to apply the remedy.”

Sir John Bowring said: “I will tell you what happened to me when I visited one of the noblest libraries in China—in the city of Ningpo—a library which glories in having received a succession of liberal gifts, and which is supposed to contain one of the best collections of literature that exist out of the capital of Pekin. I was exceedingly desirous to get access to this library; but I found that there were three great families in the neighbourhood, each of whom had a key, and it was necessary to consult them all before the library doors could be opened. Many days passed, and I, Minister though I was, and having some influence in that country, I was able, after the exercise of the little power which I possessed, and after three days’ negotiations, to get these three illustrious families to lend me their keys. I entered the library, and there were hundreds of thousands of volumes; but I did not find a single reader, and it was not in the memory of the librarian that a single book had been allowed to depart from the rooms. And if I had, I don’t mean to say they would have been of much value, for of the excellent advice to be found in

the books of China I remember one very excellent man says: 'Two words contain as much wisdom as is in the whole book—*Be pure*; there is nothing else to be found in the whole of that book.' And this I venture to say, that in any newspaper of the present hour, and in any speech of the illustrious nobleman behind me, you will find more of that practical wisdom which you can turn to daily account than you will find in all the libraries of China, of which the catalogues only contain 120 folio volumes. What they want, my friend, is what you find in this country, find it growing up and spreading more and more every day. It is that sound, practical wisdom that can be turned to hourly use; for not to know at large all things remote from use, obscure, and subtile, but to know that which lies before us in daily life, is the prime wisdom. That is wanting in China. There are 400,000,000 of men, who make no progress. They don't learn what concerns the business and duties of daily life. They are wholly occupied with the past, which was the age of ignorance. They look not forward. They have not learned that great maxim of Bacon, that the present generation is the oldest of generations, and that the earliest generation is the youngest. A maxim of more practical wisdom never fell from the lips of philosophy. What I should desire to see in this country is what I have seen in China—a universal passion, a universal desire for instruction. Certainly, that does pervade the community, but the instructors and the instruction of a valuable character are wanting."

On the 18th October, 1860, the ceremony of formally opening to the public the Liverpool Free Library and Museum took place attended with all the circumstance which so worthy and important an event justified. The day was made a general holiday. The programme of the proceedings included a reception at the Town Hall, a procession formed by the illustrious invited visitors and guests, members of the Town Council, magistrates, clergy, members of local societies, and other gentlemen. A feature of the procession was the presence of nearly five thousand local volunteers who materially added to it as an attractive and imposing spectacle. A banquet in the evening in St. George's Hall, and later in the evening displays of fireworks in several of the public parks.

Soon after 10 o'clock the various gentlemen who were to take part in the procession assembled at the Town Hall. Among the more distinguished of them were Lord Brougham, Sir John Bowring, Mr. William Ewart, M.P., the Bishop of Chester, the Rev. Dr. Raffles, the Rev. Rector Campbell, the Ven. Archdeacon Jones and Mr. T. B. Horsfall, M.P.

Previous to the formation of the procession a meeting was held under the presidency of the Mayor, for the purpose of giving a suitable opportunity for presenting to Mr. Brown addresses from local learned societies and commercial associations. In one address the Architectural and Archæological Society, Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, Literary and Philosophical Society, Polytechnic Society, and



the Chemists' Association joined in a common tribute of gratitude and appreciation of Mr. Brown's great generosity. In another address couched in no less appreciative terms the following associations joined: Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, African Association, American Chamber of Commerce, Brazilian Association, Corn Trade Association, Cotton Brokers' Association, East India and China Association, General Brokers' Association, Steamship Owners' Association, Salt Chamber of Commerce, Shipowners' Association, Underwriters' Association, Warehousekeepers' Association, West India Association, Wine and Spirit Association, &c. These Mr. Brown received and replied to in suitable terms. The procession being now formed it proceeded to the library by a lengthy and circuitous route, which included Castle Street, Lord Street, Bold Street, Great George Street, Upper Parliament Street, Rodney Street, London Road. Here close to the library, notwithstanding the inclement weather, a vast concourse of people had assembled to the estimated number of 10,000.

The route was made picturesque and attractive by the flags and devices displayed to do honour to the occasion, and by the people occupying windows and every point of vantage where a view of the worthy donor and the procession could be seen wholly or in part.

When the principal visitors and leading citizens had assembled on the dais in the library, Mr. Brown advanced and spoke as follows: "When I look round and see the immense assembly that

have met to celebrate the opening of the Free Library and Museum this day, it is a most gratifying spectacle. It shows the deep interest that is taken by the public in the provision that is made for putting invaluable treasures within the reach of those who have not the means of providing libraries for themselves. Although it was not contemplated by me, when this building was commenced that its usefulness could be extended further than the Library and Museum, fortunately it is not now limited to these objects alone. The learned societies of this town—viz., the Chemists' Association, the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, the Polytechnic Society, the Literary and Philosophical Society, and the Architectural and Archæological Society—have applied for such accommodation within these walls as will from time to time enable them to bring forward for inspection such models, new inventions and discoveries in the arts and sciences, or illustrations of antiquity, as may be deemed worthy of public notice and useful for instruction. For these purposes ample accommodation has been found by adding to the building another large room with galleries. It is important to have connected with this institution gentlemen whose associations, judgments, tastes, and pursuits lead them to appreciate and to promote the advantages of progress in the useful arts of life. I hope they will make good use of the theatre by frequently giving lectures in it, and imparting to others some of that knowledge which, by researches, investigation, and study, they have themselves acquired.

Having the co-operation of those gentlemen under the same roof with the library and museum will add to the value and usefulness of these establishments—not only to the present but to future generations. All gentlemen who visited the library when in Duke Street, must have been struck with the large and constant attendance that they found there of our hard-working and industrious classes, in confined and badly ventilated rooms. It created the necessity of providing for them more ample and better accommodation, which this building will for a time afford; but I look upon it as merely the nucleus of much larger premises that will be required to furnish the necessary accommodation, as the taste for reading is happily on the increase. By Act of Parliament we are able to collect about £6,000 per annum for the support of the Botanical Gardens and the Library and Museum. I should rather say the libraries, for there are two circulating libraries connected with this centre, and the books that are called for at those establishments are about 13,000 volumes per week. Our whole stock at present is about 36,000 volumes, but provision is made here for 120,000; and it is pleasing to observe that the class of books which are called for is becoming of a higher standard and calculated to afford instruction. It is very honourable to the readers that the books are taken care of and regularly returned. There is scarcely an exception to this rule. Considering that this is one of the largest shipping ports in the world, and that we have vessels trading to every part of the earth, there are great opportunities for

adding to the museum much that is valuable. Collections made by masters of vessels and other gentlemen are frequently lost to the public for want of suitable places of safety to keep and preserve them. This museum will furnish the means required. Indeed, I look forward, not only to gifts of single objects, but to many donations of whole collections already made, to enrich our stores; and I am sure our curator will lose no opportunity of impressing on all parties going abroad that their aid in making collections will be highly appreciated. I may say, too, that I have received a donation in a letter of which the following is a copy:—

WRAY CASTLE,  
WINDERMERE, AMBLESIDE,  
*October 18th, 1860.*

TO WILLIAM BROWN, ESQ.,  
RICHMOND HILL, LIVERPOOL.

MY DEAR SIR,—For some time past I have been anxiously waiting and seeking for a suitable place for several sets of valuable works (one of these I may mention having cost me £124 13s. \* without its massive binding) that are now in my possession. At one period I had contemplated their presentation to University College, London, but the forthcoming inauguration ceremony of your Free Library and Museum opens to me a more gratifying and satisfactory occasion for their retention in my native town; and this gratification would be deeply enhanced if you would kindly permit

\* This mark refers to a splendid work of Paul Mascagni (as issued from the press of the University of Pisa, in the year 1823), viz., the entire Anatomy of the Human Body, represented in 44 tables of copper-plate engravings, each plate being of the size of the adult figure, and each engraving having been afterwards pencil painted, so as to demonstrate the exact appearance of the several structures as they are disclosed to the anatomist.—JAMES DAWSON.

this intended donation to pass through your hands, in order that hereafter the works may remain on the shelves of your Free Library and Museum (I hope) for the use and advantage of future generations of my fellow-townsmen and others.

Should this outline of my proposed plan meet with your approval, a list of the works referred to, shall, at a fitting opportunity, be made out and placed in the hands of your secretary or librarian.

I am, my dear sir,

Ever respectfully yours,

JAMES DAWSON.

The town is greatly indebted to Lord Derby for the large and valuable collection of objects of natural history which he has presented to it; and it is a source of great gratification to me that the museum is united with the library under this roof. I should also mention that a very useful appropriation has been made, for the present at least, of a part of the basement storey, which could not be made available for either the library or museum, and which does not in the least interfere with either. It arises out of the circumstances of the times. It is used as a place of deposit for the carbines of two companies of Artillery Volunteers, and also for four or five garrison guns, to teach the men their drill. Those cannons are dummies, so far that they can never be used on the premises with gunpowder; but they will instruct the men to handle those weapons to defend this library and other institutions of our country, should ever our soil be desecrated by a foreign foe. By the library we shall be enlightened and informed how the various nations of the earth are governed, and

every man who thinks at all will be convinced that our constitutional government is the best in the world, and that when danger looms in the distance it is our duty to ourselves, our country, and our Queen to meet it. It must be well understood that our policy is protective, and not aggressive. We must all be much indebted to the architect, Mr. Weightman, for the exterior beauty and chasteness of this structure, as well as for the arrangements of its different apartments for the purposes intended, and for the further accommodation that he is making available for other important objects that suggested themselves as the building advanced. I naturally feel much interested that everything connected with it should, as far as possible, be turned to the best account, and in this he cordially co-operates. I should be wanting in what is due to Mr. Weightman and my own feelings, if I did not take this opportunity of thanking him, and saying that the Free Library does honour to his talents and his judgment. I have been looking forward for some time to the present occasion, when everything connected with this establishment would be placed under the parental care of the Corporation. That day has arrived, and I have now the satisfaction of proclaiming that the Library and Museum are open to my fellow townsmen and others, be their religion or their politics what they may. This is neutral ground. To see this building consecrated to the public good is most gratifying to me, and consummates my utmost wishes and desires. To you, Mr. Mayor, I now deliver it over, for the

perpetual benefit of the public, and especially my fellow-townsmen, earnestly wishing that prosperity, happiness, and every other blessing may attend you one and all."

The Mayor said: "I consider it one of the highest honours which have devolved upon me during my mayoralty to take so prominent a part in the proceedings of this day at the opening of the noble building which you have just presented to the town, for the purpose of a Free Library and Museum. I know well, sir, that you require no thanks at our hands, for you have what is of far greater value—the happy consciousness of your own mind. Still, we have a duty to perform, and this town would be most ungrateful if it did not offer to you and ask you to accept its best, its grateful thanks for the gift, which in point of munificence is unparalleled in the history of the town. Though I could with pleasure dwell upon the details connected with the building, the noble gift of this day, yet, as they were so well described upon the auspicious occasion of the laying of the foundation stone, and as I am sure those present will be glad to listen to the eloquence of some of the illustrious strangers who are present, I will not detain you with many more remarks; I must, however, congratulate you upon the happy completion of the noble institution which has occupied so much of your time and attention during the last few years, and to express the fervent hope, which I am sure is shared in by every inhabitant of the town, that you may be long spared to see the fruit of your labours in the

benefit which it may confer upon the rising generation. I therefore now, on behalf of the aldermen and burgesses, accept your princely gift, and beg to tender to you, as their official representative, the grateful thanks of the people of Liverpool. I have still, sir, one pleasing duty to perform, and that is to ask on behalf of the town your acceptance of this gold medal, which has on one side the portrait of yourself and on the other a view of the beautiful building, in the portico of which we now stand."

Lord Brougham said: "I can only say, in lieu of facts and deeds, words and eloquence are of no avail whatever. We have the greatest eloquence that man can bestow in the fact and deed of Mr. Brown's gift, not only to Liverpool but to the world."

Mr. James Brown and the Bishop of Chester also spoke.

Dr. Raffles said: "I can only re-echo the sentiments already expressed, of admiration and gratitude which, as a resident in Liverpool for nearly half a century, I know and feel to be the feeling of this great population to Mr. Brown for his munificent gift. I have no doubt in long coming generations his name will be pronounced in grateful acknowledgment for the gift he has this day bestowed; and if a suitable use is made of that gift, the office which my son holds (and I find he expressed a similar sentiment last night) will become a sinecure. We may shut up our gaols, give up the magistrates, and all flock to this library and to the similar institutions, which will multiply,



I trust, as the occasions for their use may increase. In one respect, I am gratified that I have the opportunity of speaking, because I wish to say to this audience that at the committee meeting of the Liverpool branch of the British and Foreign Bible Society, of which I have the honour to be one of the Secretaries, the last thing we did last Tuesday morning was by acclamation, to vote to this library the present of a copy of the Holy Scriptures in all the various tongues into which they are translated. And now will you permit me, sir, as Mr. Brown has given to you on behalf of this great community this most magnificent donation—will you allow me to present to the shelves of the library of this institution that interesting, and, I think you will agree with me, most excellent and proper gift.”

Mr. J. A. Picton said: “I can assure you that this is a very proud and happy day for me. When we look back on the ten years or twelve years that have elapsed since the first germ, the seed of this noble institution, was laid in weakness, and when we reflect on what it has grown up to, I cannot but feel grateful indeed for what has taken place, and especially that there should have been found such noble men in both senses of the word as Mr. William Brown, to contribute his noble donation for the erection of this building, and another noble man—noble in both senses—the Right Hon. the Earl of Derby, to whom we are indebted for the magnificent museum which is to be deposited in this building. Mr. Brown has not only given the money for the erection of this building, but he has

watched over it with fostering care, and has cherished it as the apple of his eye, and every suggestion which has been made has been received by him with the utmost courtesy and liberality and kindness, for he has added most materially to the sum originally stipulated as the cost—without regard to any extra cost, in order that the building might answer fully and entirely the purposes for which it was erected—so that the gift has been twice blessed, both by the money gift and by the courteous manner and liberal spirit in which that money has been expended. Allow me to add one word before I retire about what has fallen from Dr. Raffles in reference to the donation from the Bible Society. It is a noble gift, and I trust will be blessed accordingly to the intention of the donors. We could not certainly have inaugurated this building more appropriately than by the gift announced by the Rev. Dr. Raffles.”

Mr. William Ewart said: “It is a proud day for Liverpool to see this building now risen amongst us. I believe that the institution of this library will have a permanent civilising effect on the character of our population. I believe it will civilise them; I believe it will christianise them; I believe it will scatter among you the blessings of peace and of religion—and in what place should peace and religion more naturally thrive than in a commercial community—for commerce, peace, and religion, in my opinion, all are consorted and all move together. I thank you for the notice you have been so kind as to take of an individual like myself. I can only say that I always entertained the most

ardent aspirations for extending the benefits of education amongst the people, and especially of voluntary free education, for where a man educates himself, as is the old trite observation of Gibbon, that education is worth more than all that others can give him; and when we see these temples of knowledge thrown open to mankind we may conceive that self-education will receive an impulse which no time or circumstances can control, and which will be fraught with blessings to mankind. I am convinced that no institution ever was so intimately connected with the future prosperity of the people of Liverpool as this noble library will be."

Sir Robert Peel, M.P., said: "I have witnessed this ceremony this morning with feelings of surprise, satisfaction, and admiration for the character of Mr. Brown. I can conceive nothing more noble and nothing more honourable on the part of a citizen of any country than to find himself the subject of so much enthusiasm and so much merited applause on the part of his fellow-townsmen. Recollect, that this is a period when individuals are gaining great distinction in different parts of the world. Men, by the force of arms and the strength of their military genius, are acquiring most magnificent renown; but I can conceive no renown and no distinction more honourable and worthy of admiration than that of a citizen who devotes an immense portion of his fortune to the benefit of the social well-being of his fellow-townsmen. I do hope that this great institution, dedicated to the welfare of the commercial

metropolis of England—dedicated to the welfare, I believe, especially of the humbler classes of this district—will tend to promote their happiness and social well-being; and I am quite certain if they will avail themselves of the advantages now so easily placed within their grasp, and which but a few years ago they were entirely and totally debarred the enjoyment of—they will be able to enjoy with greater happiness and with greater expectation of success every position which this country can offer; and that whilst in other countries only men of rank and wealth can seek to enjoy the noblest position in those countries, yet here the humblest classes, if they will only avail themselves of the advantages placed within their grasp, may feel assured that they will attain a position which may enable them to render services not only to their native country, but to the world.”

## CHAPTER VIII.

### TRIBUTES TO MR. BROWN AND DESCRIPTION OF BROWN LIBRARY AND MUSEUM.

AS the company proceeded to inspect the various rooms and arrangements of the Library and Museum, Mr. Brown, on coming into the public reading room, paused before a half length portrait of Mr. Picton, painted by Robertson, and addressing Mr. Picton, said: "I have been deputed by the Library Committee to present this portrait of yourself, its chairman, to the public, the committee considering it right that you should be represented in the building." A tablet on the frame bears the following inscription:

*Presented by the friends of J. A. Picton,  
Esq., F.S.A., as an acknowledgment of his  
eminent services as Chairman of the Committee  
of the Liverpool Free Library and Museum,  
October 18th, 1860.*

Mr. Picton having expressed his deep sense of the honour thus conferred upon him and his appreciation of the kindness of his friends, the company pursued their course of inspection.

In further celebration of the inaugural ceremony of the day, a banquet took place in the evening in

St. George's Hall, when some 800 ladies and gentlemen were present. After the customary loyal and other toasts had been proposed and responded to, the Mayor rose and said: "My lords, ladies, and gentlemen, I must now crave your indulgence whilst I propose the next toast, the toast of the evening; and I feel my entire inability to do justice to it. I know if I were to propose it without a single word of preface, the mere mention of it would ensure a most cordial and enthusiastic reception. But if I did so I should not be doing justice either to your feelings or my own, and yet I feel it very difficult to express the thoughts in our hearts this evening. This town has had a gift presented to it this day in point of munificence unparalleled in the annals of the town, and we are met here this evening to do honour to the noble-minded and large-hearted donor. We prize it highly, my lords, ladies, and gentlemen, but not on that account alone. Gifts, as well as deeds, are to be valued not for their splendour only, but for their utility and the consequences they are likely to produce. We measure the deeds of the warrior not by their daring only, but by the results they may happily ensure; we estimate the measures of the statesman not so much by the eloquence with which he proclaims them as by the beneficial effects which they may have on the interests of the world. We admire the works of the poet and the historian less for the beauty of art than for the beauty of composition, and we appreciate the labours of the philanthropist who has gauged the wants of his



BROWN LIBRARY AND MUSEUM





fellow-man less for the greatness of the gift than for the benefit which it has conferred on mankind. We prize this, my lords, ladies, and gentlemen, for the munificence, the wise consideration and the kindly spirit which have dictated the gift of this day, which to all coming time will connect the prosperity of Liverpool with the name and liberality of William Brown. At this period of the evening, my lords, ladies, and gentlemen, it is my pleasing duty to inaugurate the marble representation of your honoured guest. It is true we need no memento, for his lasting monument will ever be found in the noble building which he has presented to the town this day. Still our children's children might desire to see the outward lineaments of their father's friend, and we are glad that the sculptor's art has secured for us a faithful likeness of the venerable man. I give you, my lords, ladies, and gentlemen, 'The health of William Brown,' and may he long live to see the fruits of his labours in the benefits which they may confer upon us and the rising generation."

Mr. Brown then rose, and after the enthusiastic greetings with which he was received had subsided, spoke as follows:—"I have looked forward with some solicitude to the period when we should be able to open the Free Library and Museum, and I assure you it gave me very great pleasure this morning that my wishes were fully consummated by my being able to hand it over to my friend our worthy Mayor, to be placed in the hands of the Corporation—a permanent body, which secures to it the advantages of the management and control,

in perpetuity, of gentlemen whom my fellow-townsmen from time to time are pleased to elect for the superintendence and regulation of our local affairs. Although my mind is not stored with that literary lore which is possessed by many of the noblemen and gentlemen present, and although I have not the tact, the talent, nor the memory to bring forward such arguments and illustrations as will impress on the minds of all the inestimable value of knowledge, I nevertheless feel strongly that the cultivation of our intellects by every means in our power contributes to our happiness, and makes us more respected and more useful to those around us. Idleness is the greatest misfortune that can befall any man; but those who are fond of reading, if they have no other pursuit, never can be idle. We ought to encourage boys to read well-selected moral and amusing novels. It is of much importance, as it leads them to look to biography, travels, and history, and paves the way to a taste for the arts and sciences, every step in which gives pleasure and prevents listlessness and idleness. The want of invigorating and rational amusements at proper seasons, and of useful employment, too frequently leads to immoral and vicious pursuits, and I think that we must all feel that a well-selected library aids in preventing these evils. No matter in what position of life a man's lot is cast, the better informed he is the more he is respected and the more he influences the circle around him. What would the power and social position of England be without our commerce? Where would our commerce be

without some knowledge of political economy—the aid of the chemist, the botanist, the mechanic, the engineer, and others who, with persevering industry cultivate the arts and sciences? Civilisation is greatly indebted to those gentlemen. Without their aid we should be little better than the untutored Indian. Every day is bringing to light some new discovery. Had we possessed the knowledge some fifty years ago which geologists have now acquired, many bitter disappointments would have been prevented and much treasure would have been saved in looking for coals and other minerals where none were to be found. I am sanguine that the Library and Museum, from the valuable works that will be found there, will contain information that will prevent much loss of time and many of those disappointments to our thoughtful and inquiring people, as there they will have an opportunity of referring to the specifications of all existing patents, and more or less information on every subject interesting to mankind; and the five literary and scientific societies which have been grafted on the Library and Museum in the course of its erection cannot fail to turn to the best account the knowledge that is contained within its walls. The great advantage of education is shown in every movement of our lives. The time has happily gone by when it was considered dangerous to instruct the people. Nothing is more satisfactory than to see how knowledge enables the labouring classes to understand and appreciate the advantages that they and their country derive from

improved machinery. The more we are instructed the more we value the advantages we possess over every other nation, and the less we are exposed to any misunderstandings amongst ourselves. Every day we live we see the importance of putting within reach of the masses the means of getting instruction. It is a most important element in securing to us the freedom of the press and of discussion, and that knowledge which is necessary to amend our laws and to convince all of the advantages of a constitutional government."

Lord Stanley, M.P., in responding to the toast of the House of Stanley, said: "Many years ago—long, I believe, before there was any such thing as a public library in the town of Liverpool—Lord Derby was employed in forming that large collection of objects of natural history which occupied so much of his time and thought, and the question was then discussed between him and his immediate successor in the family as to what the ultimate destination of that collection should be; and they both agreed without a moment of hesitation or doubt that there was no place that had upon them or their family claims so strong as this town of Liverpool, or that there was any place in which a large assemblage of the wonders of nature might be more usefully or more appropriately deposited; for we know that the commerce and the enterprise of Liverpool are as cosmopolitan as science herself, and that there is no country in the world so remote or so barbarous but that Liverpool men, Liverpool capital, Liverpool enterprise, Liverpool industry have contrived

to find their way. What my Lord Derby left to others to carry out, Mr. Brown has witnessed with his own eyes. He has witnessed the accomplishment of the objects which he himself had in view. He has witnessed the interest and enthusiasm with which men of all employments, of all classes, and of all parties, have come forward to indicate their cordial acceptance of the gift which has been so nobly offered to them, and their appreciation of the advantages which may henceforth flow from that magnificent donation. You, gentlemen, as citizens of Liverpool, may feel a legitimate pride in the noble building which adorns the hill opposite to us; and you may reflect with equal and legitimate satisfaction on the enjoyment which the contents of that building will give to all who participate in its advantages, as well as the impetus it will give to the cause of education and of science in the district."

Mr. Thomas Bazley, M.P., in proposing the toast of "House of Lords," said: "I cannot on the present occasion withhold from my old and valued friend, William Brown, my meed of approbation of his munificent gift to the town of Liverpool. He is indeed manifesting by that gift an acquaintance with the tendency of the age in which we live. Unless we have intelligence diffused amongst all classes of the community, the respective duties which are expected from all will not be adequately performed. As the people are enjoying increased liberty and still seek increased privileges, it is right and prudent that they should receive increased intelligence, and

amply comprehend those rights and privileges for which they are continually contending. The prosperity of Lancashire, in my opinion, depends upon the increase of intelligence, and I do rejoice that the kindred spirit of Manchester is proud of following the example which has been this day inaugurated in Liverpool."

Lord Brougham said: "I look forward with the greatest hope and with exultation to the prospect of the inestimable benefit which is to be derived from the free use of this Free Library and Free Museum. I have no manner of doubt that it will tend to make the members of the different communions more religious, men of all classes more moral citizens, also of all classes more loyal, more orderly and better subjects, and that the whole community will be improved in its duties towards man, in its duty towards the government, and in its duty towards Heaven, by the improvement which it will derive from this institution."

Later in the evening the Mayor rose and said: "When the Free Library was established in Liverpool, it was hoped and expected that donations would be given to it and to the Museum from time to time. That expectation has been partly fulfilled, and I have been allowed the great gratification of announcing a donation which exceeds amazingly anything we expected. It is from a gentleman who resided for many years in this town, from one who was long and highly esteemed by all who knew him, Joseph Shipley, Esq., partner of our honoured guest. I will read

to you an extract from his letter:—‘I see that Mr. Brown’s noble building for the Free Library is to be opened on the 18th of the coming month. It will be an occasion of much interest, and one on which I should like to be present. As that cannot be, I desire, as an old resident of Liverpool, to mark my sympathy in the design and object by making a donation of £1,000 to the institution, in promotion of the extension and usefulness of the contents of the library. May I ask you to do this for me?’ The letter is addressed to Mr. Francis A. Hamilton. We see, I think, the influence of example; and I hope that that example may be continued, and that it may result in further donations to the library, which may make it one of the first and best in the kingdom.”

Mr. W. Ewart, M.P., said “he had been asked to speak upon the establishment of Free Public Libraries. He happened to be connected with the origin of this question. When wandering through the libraries of the Continent he asked himself why this country should not have similar institutions, and why the ancient civilisation of Rome should be confined to old Latin countries and not extended to this country. He resolved to bring the question before Parliament and the public, in the hope that we might have in this country, libraries freely opened to the people as they were in other countries of Europe. The time had arrived when he saw the accomplishment of his wishes; for free libraries were now opened in 25 places, and he had no doubt the number would be largely increased in future. Having come to

Liverpool after a considerable absence, he rejoiced to see its improved aspects in all respects. An Italian patriot, when he spoke in Venice, the commercial capital of Italy, said *esta perpetua*, and he (Mr. Ewart) could only repeat it in his native town of Liverpool, and he was convinced that nothing would tend more to perpetuate it than the foundation of institutions such as these, which would at once extend the civilisation and commerce of a great community."

There also spoke: Colonel MacIver, Sir John Bowring, the Hon. Algernon Egerton, the Archdeacon of Liverpool, Mr. T. B. Horsfall, M.P., Colonel Smythe, Colonel Bousfield, Mr. J. Ireland Blackburne, Mr. James Brown, Mr. Charles Turner, Mr. Gilbert Henderson (Recorder), and Mr. J. A. Picton.

Though the major demonstrations and festivities of the opening day were now concluded, it was not until the evening of the day following that they finally terminated. On this evening, the Mayor, Mr. T. D. Anderson, gave a soirée in the Town Hall to some 1,200 persons, principally members of local learned societies. The preparations for the pleasure and gratification of the guests were on an elaborate scale, and an evening long remembered for its varied enjoyments was the happy result.

The following official description of the new building is taken from the *Liverpool Mercury*:—  
 "The new Library and Museum, erected from the design of Mr. Allom, but modified by John Weightman, Esq., is situated on the northerly



side of Shaw's Brow, and presents a centre, flanks, and wings. The centre is a deeply-recessed hexastyle Corinthian portico, after the Temple of Jupiter Stator in Rome, having an inner row of four columns, two intercolumniations being omitted to gain width in the entrance; the floor of the portico being attained by steps from the footwalks, enclosed within screen walls, and landing at each end of the portico, and not in the middle. The remainder of the front is enclosed from the street by a stone balustrade and iron gates. The two wings have each four Corinthian pilasters, irregularly spaced, the two in the centre standing forward about two feet; between them is a niche, with pedimented cornices on carved trusses; above are small panels and wreaths. The flanks between the central portico and the wings have each five windows, with horizontal cornices on trusses, above which are small panels with large wreaths in them. The roofs are screened from view by lofty attics or parapet walls. On entering the building through the centre portico, the visitor passes into the vestibule 31 feet by 23 feet, with a panelled flat ceiling; beyond the vestibule is the central hall, the principal architectural feature of the interior; and beyond the hall is the principal staircase. The central hall is divided at each end from the vestibule or staircase by a screen of two Doric columns in antis. It is 90 feet long, 53 feet wide, and 46 feet high. It is divided, basilica-wise, into three portions, a centre or nave, and the side aisles or corridors; the latter are separated from the nave by an arcade, which supports the

gallery floor, and the Ionic columns which carry the roof. At each end of the hall the entablature on these columns is continuous, but at the sides it is broken round each column, and from the cornice spring arches, which are groined into the vaults over the gallery. Over the centre of the hall or nave the ceiling is flat, coved down to the cornice with panels, the mouldings of which are enriched. Three of these panels are glazed, but the principal light is derived from seven-round arched windows on each side. Between the columns in the gallery is a stone balustrade.

“The principal staircase is  $31\frac{1}{2}$  feet by 30 feet. The stairs consist of a central flight, with a continuous landing the full width of the staircase and two return flights: the outer string of the stairs is a plinth of Yorkshire stone, with dado and moulded capping in lieu of balusters and handrail. The steps are from Craigleith quarry.

“This arrangement of the vestibule, central hall, and staircase, gives an agreeable vista nearly 150 feet in length.

“On the ground floor, to the right of the principal entrance, is the door to the free library. The reading room, which is 110 feet long and 50 feet wide, is divided into two portions by two Doric columns in antis near the south end, and here are four windows looking into Shaw's Brow. The remainder of the room is lighted by two large skylights, and by windows in an attic raised upon panelled segmental arches, of bold and simple design, springing from piers intended to form shafts to be used in ventilation. The Doric

entablature is continued all round the centre part of the room. Adjoining the reading room, in the extreme south-east corner of the building, is the students' reading room,  $40\frac{1}{2}$  feet wide by 28 feet; and running northwards from this, parallel to the principal reading room, and along the eastern end of the building is the reference library, 75 feet by 27 feet, fitted up with book cases in two tiers, the upper accessible from a light iron gallery; additional storage for books is provided in three rooms, all lighted from the roof, which are over the rooms just described. The total accommodation provided is estimated at 100,000 volumes.

“Returning to the principal entrance, on the left hand is the entrance into the museum, which consists of five rooms upon the ground floor and also on the upper floor. Two of these rooms are each 50 feet by 27 feet, two  $40\frac{1}{2}$  feet by 28 feet, and one 70 feet by 27 feet. Access to the upper rooms is gained by the principal staircase.

“An additional room is obtained over the vestibule of the principal entrance.

“The basement under three of the rooms of the museum have been prepared with solid floors for the reception of sculpture and other heavy articles; the others will be used as workrooms by the curator.

“In the extreme north-east corner of the building on the ground floor are three class rooms and a committee room; above the committee room is a lecture room 28 feet by 25 feet; and over the class rooms a larger room also for lectures, which is intended to accommodate nearly 400 persons.

“The entire cost of the building, including the fittings, lighting, warming, and ventilating, will be nearly £40,000, and the whole will be defrayed by Mr. Brown.”

Apart from the stately and imposing appearance of the new building as compared with the one it superseded, it was with much appreciation the committee, and particularly the staff, viewed its internal spaciousness and ample accommodation for books and readers. Its lecture hall and class rooms suggested opportunities for more extended usefulness, while its central and commanding position in the town justified the expectation of greatly increased popularity. All these anticipations the worthy donor had the pleasure of seeing verified to a degree which must have been highly gratifying. The ceremonies and rejoicings on the opening day of the library; the statue by McDowall erected to his honour in St. George's Hall; the life-size portrait in the library painted by Sir T. Watson-Gordon; his baronetage, and the change of name of Shaw's Brow to William Brown Street in perpetuation of his memory, must all have been sources of pleasure and satisfaction as demonstrating the appreciation of his generosity; but one cannot help thinking that they fell into insignificance compared with the pleasure and satisfaction arising from the contemplation of the thousands who made daily use of the building he had erected for their mental betterment. His was a noble and generous gift, and justified the honours his Sovereign and his townsmen conferred upon him.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE CORPORATION FREE LECTURES INAUGURATED.

**A**LTHOUGH the formal opening of the new library took place on the 18th of October, it was not until the 3rd of the following December that its doors were thrown open to the public. The new reading room accommodated 450 persons, as against 200 in the old one, and the area of library space was 1,646 feet as against 414 feet. But, notwithstanding this greater seat accommodation, the attendance of readers was from the first so large that all the resources of the library were taxed to the utmost to provide the amount of seat room which should prevent would-be readers going away disappointed. An almost continuously crowded room lacks the quiet and repose which the majority of persons find necessary for profitable reading and study of works of higher rank than novels and romances. Hence a special room was absolutely essential if the library was to be the help in the cause of self-education, which with very many persons is the only justification for the existence of rate supported libraries. An inner room, 40 feet by 28 feet, was provided for such student readers, and became familiarly known as the students' room. This special room was highly appreciated for its quietness and certain little

privileges, and continued to be the almost loving resort of the more thoughtful readers until the opening of the Picton Reading Room, when the exigencies of the library compelled the appropriation of the students' room for purposes of a general business character. The effect of the greater accommodation, comfort, and facilities for readers in the Brown Library, as compared with the Duke Street premises, is forcibly illustrated by a comparison of the number of books issued during the last complete year in the one, and the first year in the other. In the old library the last year's issues were 195,962 volumes, in the new library the first year's issues were 456,372 volumes. This difference is very marked, and must have been as gratifying to the donor as it was to the committee.

The local Act of Parliament under which the Liverpool Public Libraries are governed gives power for the delivery of free lectures. In this it is distinctive. Until the erection of the Brown Library the committee could not see their way to avail themselves of this power. The new building contained not only several large class rooms, but a lecture hall capable of seating 400 persons in a semi-circle. Such a useful adjunct it was felt ought to be turned to account as soon as possible by utilizing it for the delivery of lectures calculated to act as a stimulus to reading and study.

The up-keep of a palatial building like the one the Library Committee now possessed, soon proved much more expensive than the

comparatively insignificant premises which formed the old home of the library in Duke Street, and this, added to certain extraordinary expenses on account of fittings, furniture, &c. for the new building, soon brought the committee face to face with financial difficulties. The new building was not endowed, the library rate was fixed and unresponsive to new expenses, and the rate had in part to be applied to "maintaining and keeping in good order and repair the Botanic Gardens and Herbarium."

A report published at this time by the Library Committee, sketches briefly and concisely the growth and development of the institutions under their charge, and gives in a tabular form their annual income and expenditure from 1852-1861. To add further to the committee's difficulties at this period, they found themselves engaged in expensive litigation. Owing to the opposition of the ratepayers to the misreading of the Library Act, whereby the Corporation sought to obtain the full assessed amount of the rate, which it was estimated the several parishes of the town ought to produce, irrespective of empty houses and other causes of leakage, by levying more than a penny in the pound, a trial and a judgment adverse to the Corporation ensued. This legal decision resulted in the loss of nearly a year's income, which, however, after much inconvenience, was finally made good by the help of the Finance Committee. This special report declares itself to be written "in reference to, and consequent upon, the decision of the

Court of Queen's Bench." On the report being considered by the Town Council, it was felt that the committee's straightened financial position was deserving of favourable consideration, and effect was given to this feeling by the Council permanently relieving them from the costs and charges of the Botanic Gardens. As the cost of the gardens in 1861 amounted to £1,568, this welcome addition to the committee's income for the purposes of the libraries and museum only, enabled many desired developments to be carried out for the public benefit. The frequency with which financial difficulty besets the Library Committee, might almost suggest that they are ever in this unenviable position. With an income which may be said to be fixed, or at most of slow expansion, and with institutions ever growing and developing, and, as a consequence, growing more and more expensive to maintain, financial difficulty cannot be wondered at. The demand of the public for additional branch libraries necessarily meant greater establishment charges, and heavier bills for books and binding. The accumulation of books necessitates from time to time structural alterations to provide storage, and in the case of many books, particularly on science and the mechanical arts, an ever increasing outlay to keep them up to date and abreast with the progress of discovery and invention.

Mention has already been made of the lecture hall and class rooms in the new library; also of the provision in the Liverpool Library and Museum Act for the delivery of lectures. The



committee having obtained the financial relief which they so much desired, and for the want of which much useful work had been hindered, felt themselves in a position to arrange for the delivery of several courses of public lectures; viewing such as an important auxiliary to the educational work in which they were engaged. This was the beginning of those valuable incentives to reading which have been given in varying number continuously during the past 38 years, and which have made the Liverpool Public Libraries pre-eminent among similar institutions in this useful and popular means of education. In regard to these lectures, the committee in their annual report for 1864-65 write as follows: "The Act of Parliament under which the library and museum are established, makes provision for the delivery of lectures on scientific subjects, either gratuitously or by charge for admission. An experiment is now being made to carry out this purpose. A School of Science has for some time past been conducted in the rooms of the library, especially intended for the industrial classes. This school is in no way connected with the library, nor supported by its funds. It has already been the means of educating many working men in the sciences connected with their business; but a want has been felt of popular lectures to supplement the instruction given in the school. The Library Committee, considering that such a plan came legitimately within the scope of their commission, have arranged for four courses of lectures; one on

geology, by Dr. Birkenhead; one on chemistry, by Dr. Newton Samuelson; one on geometry, by Professor Cameron; and one on natural philosophy, by Dr. Birkenhead."

These lectures were duly delivered with a total attendance of 2,666. Considering that the lectures were entirely free and treated popularly by means of simple experiments, objects and specimens selected from the museum, and the blackboard, this number does not point any great measure of success. The subjects, however, were not such as to appeal to the many and calculated to attract large audiences, still the committee saw no reason to consider them a failure, or be deterred from repeating an experiment fraught with so much educational advantage. One thing was certain, that the comparative paucity in number of auditors was balanced by their zeal and seriousness of purpose. For some five years these subjects, occasionally varied by zoology, mineralogy, and drawing, formed the lecture programme; but in 1872 a departure was made by the delivery of six lectures consisting of dramatic readings. If there was any doubt about the statistical success of the scientific lectures, there could be no possible doubt of the statistical success of the readings, the hall being full to overflowing on each occasion of their delivery. In the following year the number of lectures was increased, and as a further innovation a lecture was given on German music. It was found that the attendances at the courses of scientific lectures had a disappointing way of being excellent at the beginning of the series, but

of gradually falling off to an almost vanishing point towards its close. As a consequence of this, single lectures, complete in themselves, began to be delivered on subjects of a less technical character. With the introduction of the lantern and photographic slides as a means of illustrating lectures came almost a revolution in the art of lecturing, and when the Picton Lecture Hall was constructed and opened, something like a corresponding revolution took place in the attendances, the result of the seating capacity of the new hall, which was threefold greater than the one previously in use in the Brown Library, and of its more convenient access and superior general arrangements. Hitherto the public appreciation of lectures was not very pronounced, but the pictorial illustrations, often artistically coloured, with which lectures now began to be made effective and attractive, gave the lecture a position in public estimation it never before possessed. Previously, the working man was more conspicuous by his absence than his presence at the lectures, but since then mechanics and labouring men form the greater and by no means least attentive and appreciative portion of the lecture audiences. The beneficial effects from their attendance may only be inferred, but the character of the lectures and the deep interest shown by these men make the inference easy to draw. In 1881 Liverpool University College was founded. For some years previously the free lectures given by the Library Committee had gradually resolved themselves into two kinds,

those of a scientific and strictly educational character, given in courses, and delivered in the autumn of each year, and those of a decided popular character given in the winter. In this way the committee sought to help and to foster earnest and studious endeavours in self education, and to provide lighter and more enticing mental food for those who did not care for or could not digest stronger meat. In 1878, and again in 1879, a course of thirteen Cambridge University local lectures, on Political Economy, was given by the Rev. W. Moore Ede. The following year the Rev. Alfred Caldecott delivered a series on English Prose Literature, 1600-1720, under the same high educational authority. In 1881, Mr. Hall Caine, in a series of twelve lectures, continued the subject under the title of English Prose Literature, 1720-1880. Several of the courses of autumn lectures were followed by examinations and the granting of certificates of proficiency to those who were successful in gaining the regulation number of marks, and in several instances prizes were given, the outcome of the private generosity of members of the Library Committee. As has been said the lectures delivered in long courses were comparative failures from the point of view of attendance, though, as if to prove the rule, the twelve delivered in 1884, on Astronomy, by the Rev. Father Perry, S.J., were remarkably well attended from first to last. The subject of astronomy always proves attractive, and in the hands of so learned and able a lecturer as Father Perry, the lectures were singularly interesting and instructive.

After the foundation of the University College, and the organisation of their various classes, it was felt that the efficient body of professors and lecturers of that institution were better able to impart the knowledge which had been aimed at in the autumn lectures of the Library Committee. Thirty-eight years have passed away since the free lectures were inaugurated, but never were they so popular and so highly appreciated as at present. With the growth and extension of the city came the demand for lectures delivered nearer the homes of the people. Reasonable requests of this nature could not be ignored by the committee, and so instead of some thirty or forty lectures given in one centre as at the beginning, they have now increased to 112 delivered in ten centres, and requests are still preferred for more. So many gratifying results flow from the lectures, that the committee regard with much satisfaction their initiation of this valuable adjunct to library work and the statistics which illustrate its appreciation and uninterrupted continuance during the past 37 years.

Number of Lectures given	- -	1,978
Attendances	- - - - -	1,400,311

## CHAPTER X.

### NEED OF AN EXTENSION OF THE REFERENCE LIBRARY.

FOR some few years after the opening of the Brown Library, it may be said to have pursued the even tenor of its way without material incident, but nevertheless with ever-increasing profit and advantage to the large number of readers who sought its resources for the purposes of mental improvement and recreation. It is difficult to gauge the extent of profit and advantage individual readers reaped, but it is within the certain knowledge of the library staff that many young men have created for themselves honourable careers, largely, and in some cases wholly, through the facilities afforded by the library for acquiring the knowledge necessary to pass school and college examinations, and to enable them to excel in various arts and sciences.

In 1866, Mr. John Stuart Dalton, the first librarian, died, and was succeeded in his office by the deputy-librarian, Mr. George Hudson. In 1875, death removed Mr. Hudson, and the present chief librarian, who was then superintendent of the lending branches, was appointed in his place.



*Photo. by Brown, Barnes & Bell.*

PETER COWELL.  
Chief Librarian.





A crisis had now arrived in the development of both Reference and Lending Libraries—the result of their extraordinary growth and popularity. The borrowers from the latter, which only numbered two, had increased so greatly (nearly 10,000) that it had become necessary to limit the issue of tickets of membership. The buildings of these libraries were totally inadequate to the requirements, and this made the administration difficult and arduous, and was the cause of much dissatisfaction and annoyance to borrowers.

It is not too much to say that both these libraries, which were only adapted dwelling houses, were primitive and out of date. In the Reference Library, ingenuity for increasing the accommodation for books and readers could go no further, and this was particularly applicable to the student readers who were putting the library to so excellent a use.

On 8th April, 1875, at a meeting of the Town Council, on proposing the adoption of the minutes of the Library Committee, the Chairman, Mr. Picton, addressed the Council as follows: “He wished,” he said, “to say a word upon a subject which was not embodied in the minutes, but with which he thought the Council should be made acquainted at as early a stage as was possible. There had lately been paid into the funds appertaining to the library and museum a considerable sum by the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board, arising out of rates which had been in dispute. The rating question had now been settled, and arrangements, he believed, had

been made by which any further disputes would be prevented for some time to come. With the sanction of the Council, the committee proposed to appropriate that sum in the erection of a new reading-room. The Walker Art Gallery was rapidly approaching completion, and it would form a very handsome addition to the fine buildings in the locality. Between the Free Library and the Walker Art Gallery there was a piece of land which had always been contemplated as a site for a new reading-room, which at the present time was much required. The site was in many respects a very awkward one, owing to the curve and different angles it possessed; but between the two buildings the committee proposed to erect a circular reading-room with the money paid over, and to borrow on security of the rate the balance required to complete the work. He merely mentioned the matter now to prepare the mind of the Council for a scheme which would be brought before them." The words addressed by Mr. Picton to the Town Council were not long in bearing fruit. In 1874 the Council determined on the erection of a new reading-room, circular in plan and connected with the Art Gallery, then in course of erection, on the one side, and the Brown Library and Museum on the other; and Mr. Cornelius Sherlock, the architect of the Walker Art Gallery, was instructed to prepare plans in architectural harmony with the adjoining buildings.

Plans were accordingly prepared and adopted, and on the 2nd December in the following year the first stone was laid of this new extension

of the library by the chairman, Mr. Picton, in accordance with the following resolution of the Council:—

At a meeting of the Council on 6th October, 1875, it was moved by Mr. Samuelson, seconded by Mr. Avison, and resolved unanimously:—

That Mr. James A. Picton, the Chairman of the Library, Museum, and Arts Committee be requested to lay the Foundation Stone of the new Circular Reading Room of the Free Public Library as soon as the contracts are executed, and that the same be called the Picton Reading Room.

On the occasion of this ceremony, the Mayor (Lieut.-Colonel P. Thompson) in the presence of Mr. William Rathbone, M.P., Mr. John Torr, M.P., the Rector of Liverpool (Rev. A. Stewart), the Rev. Charles Beard, the Rev. S. Pearson, General Fairchild (American Consul), Mr. J. B. Aspinall (Recorder), Mr. E. R. Russell, Mr. James Whitty, Admiral Evans, Mr. P. H. Rathbone, Mr. A. B. Forwood, Mr. W. B. Forwood, Mr. Thomas Avison, the Rev. Canon Hume, the Rev. H. H. Higgins, Alderman A. B. Walker, Mr. Edward Samuelson, Mr. T. B. Royden, Mr. William Crosfield, and other gentlemen, presented a silver trowel to Mr. Picton, and having invited him to perform the ceremony, briefly addressed the assembly, referring to Mr. Picton's services to the town, and to the efforts which for many years had been made, under his guidance, to supply the reading wants of the people of Liverpool.

In reply to the kindly words of the Mayor, Mr. Picton said: "At the request of the Town Council the duty devolves upon me of laying the

first stone of the new reading-room. It is 17 years since the same ceremony was performed in connection with the adjoining building of the Free Public Library. The intervening years have added to the extent and usefulness of the institution until an enlargement has become necessary. That enlargement was commenced by the munificence of our late Mayor, in the erection of the Walker Art Gallery, so suitably called by his name, and we are now taking the initiative in completing the structure by the erection of a noble reading-room. What does all this indicate? What inferences can we draw in relation to the good old town, of whose inhabitants we form a part? The ceremony of to-day indicates, I think, several very important facts. First of all it gives striking evidence of the increase of wealth and population of the town. The locality where we stand, little more than a century ago, was an open heath. Nearly opposite, the old infirmary had just been erected. The neighbourhood then became the seat of an important manufacture, that of pottery, and Shaw's Brow became crowded with cottages and manufactories. The course of events has changed all that. The cottages and manufactories have been swept away, the old infirmary has been removed, and in its place there has arisen a magnificent hall worthy to be compared with the noblest buildings of ancient Greece and Rome. In place of the squalid cottages and dingy potteries there now stands forth a noble terrace, crowned with a group of buildings devoted to art,

science, and literature, which greet the traveller on first emerging from the railway station, and which cannot fail to impress his mind favourably in his first aspect of the town. Again, there is scope for congratulation in the object and purpose for which the group of buildings has been erected. Man does not live by bread alone. It is in vain that wealth accumulates, and its visible signs predominate around, if people remain uneducated and insensible to the higher qualities which dignify and elevate human nature. The past century, to which I have alluded, has manifested a wonderful change in this respect, for which we have reason to be thankful. At that time the spot on which we stand was occupied by a cockpit, the remains of which were discovered in clearing the adjoining land. The advance from a cockpit to a free library is a fitting illustration of the progress in cultivation, as well as wealth, to which the past century has been witness. A Free Library, a Museum, a Gallery of Arts—what do they signify? I think they signify much. They indicate a reading public, and, to some extent, an educated public; at all events, a public seeking for education. They indicate a spirit of inquiry into the works of nature in the world around. They indicate a taste for the beautiful in nature and in art. They testify to the softening and elevating influences of mental cultivation. It must be remembered that this institution is not for a class or section of the community. It is the common property of all, irrespective of rank, station, or circumstances.

There is here no exclusiveness, no assertion of superiority of one above another. In the strictest sense of the word, it is a popular institution. I trust that those who come after us will bless the name and memory of the individuals who contrived, and the municipal authorities who had the courage and liberality to carry out, the erection of this great institution."

Mr. John Torr, M.P., proposing a vote of thanks to Mr. Picton, remarked: "Our worthy friend, in laying the foundation stone, alluded to the inclement weather, and although it has not got much brighter since Mr. Picton make the remark, still we have been enlightened in more than one way by the speech he has delivered to us. It will warm us, and take away the chill which the elements have imposed upon us, to hear the eloquence and heartiness which he expressed in the cause of literature."

This was seconded by Mr. William Rathbone, M.P., who said: "I shall not detain you longer than to say that a far more solid and enduring claim to our gratitude, and a far more solid foundation for the work that we have undertaken here to day than that solid stone itself is the work Mr. Picton has long been doing, in trying to fix in the character and customs of the people of Liverpool that desire for literature which the building we are about to erect is intended to gratify."

A vote of thanks to the Mayor, moved by Mr. Edward Samuelson, seconded by Mr. William Crosfield, concluded the proceedings.

Immediately after the ceremony of laying the foundation stone there was a luncheon in the Reading Room of the Free Library.

Mr. Torr, in responding to the toast, "The Houses of Parliament," said that "the House of Commons had to deal with large matters, and take broad views of things. They could not, he thought, have a better evidence of this than in the purchase of the Suez Canal—the highway to their possessions in the East. By that very happy incident—accomplished without the aid of the House of Commons—they had secured that highway, and now they could look on with comparative complacency at anything that might be done. As far as their great national interests were concerned, nothing could be done to secure a greater blessing to the country, connected as it is with the East, than the security of that great highway. And there was no town that possessed greater interest in that highway than this great port. Another point was, that the whole country from the most advanced Liberal to the stoutest Tory, was unanimous that the purchase was a step in the right direction." Referring to the ceremony of that day, the hon. gentleman said that "they must grieve to say that the criminal statistics of the town were not more favourable, and they must all agree that in order to secure a higher tone of morality they must try to induce the people to cultivate a higher class of education. The step taken that day must be attended with great advantage to the people, and he hoped that similar movements would occupy the attention of

their corporate rulers in other directions. In legislating for Liverpool, they should legislate for her fifty years hence, and not for what she was to day; for no town in the country had a greater future before her."

Mr. William Rathbone followed. He said that "the proceedings of that day carried him back to the time when Sir William Brown first proposed to found that library. At that time it was much discussed whether or not it would be better, instead of having a large central library, to have a number of small ones in different parts of the town. It was quite right that they should found a great reservoir of learning, but he hoped that they would not stop there. There were few merchants in Liverpool who were able to accumulate such a fortune as Sir William Brown, but it was not necessary that smaller libraries should be formed by such rich men. He could not help hoping that sooner or later Sir William Brown's example would be followed, and that gentlemen who had acquired wealth and distinction in the town would wish to leave a mark behind them as a testimony of gratitude for the prosperity they had attained. He thought that such gentlemen would be very much encouraged by the way in which Mr. Picton and those who worked with him extended the sphere of usefulness of that great library. He (Mr. Rathbone) hoped, therefore, that many years would not pass before every ward in the town would have a library, each bearing testimony to some good, industrious, and honourable merchant who had passed away."



Mr. Picton, responding to the toast of his health moved by the Mayor, gave a brief account of the history of the Library, Museum, and Gallery of Arts, remarking that private liberality had furnished some £160,000 during twenty years.

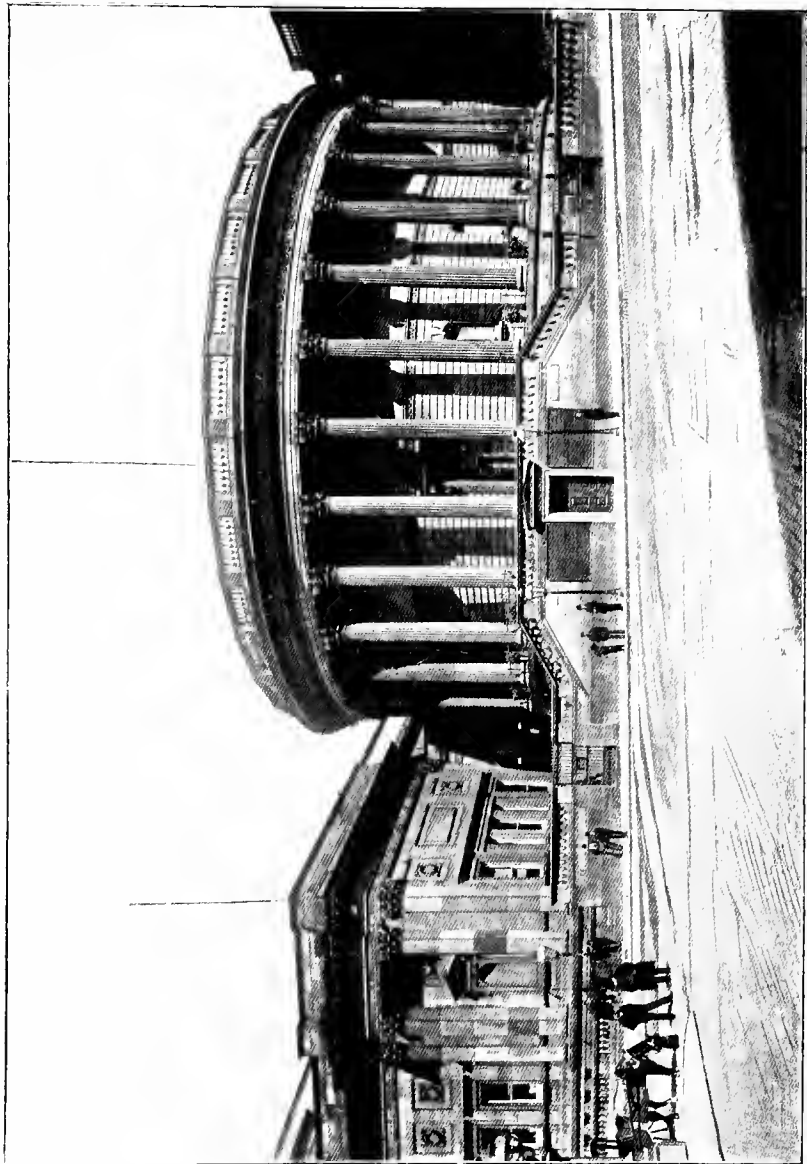
Alderman Walker, Mr. E. Samuelson, the Rev. H. H. Higgins, Mr. J. B. Aspinall (Recorder), General Fairchild, the Rev. Canon Hume, and the Rev. J. A. Picton, also spoke.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE PICTON READING ROOM OPENED.

**B**ETWEEN the dates of opening the Brown Library in 1860, and the new Picton Reading Room in 1879, two events happened which though not directly connected with the library had nevertheless indirectly an important influence upon it. These were the gift by Mr. Joseph Mayer in 1867 of his valuable and extensive antiquarian collection, and the completion and presentation to the town in 1877 by the late Sir Andrew B. Walker of the Art Gallery which bears his name.

There are few libraries of importance but possess, more or less, a character of their own, arising either from important bequests of specialists, the trade and commerce of the district in which the libraries are situated, or possibly, as in the case of the Liverpool Public Library, from affiliated institutions like the Museum and Art Gallery, which are administered by the same committee and form a complete *tria juncta in uno* by virtue of their position, management, and related work. Later, the work of the committee for technical instruction and its grant of money for technical books has not been without its influence



*Photo. by Brown, Barnes & Bell.*

LIVERPOOL PUBLIC LIBRARY.



on the scientific and practical side of the library, while the acquisition in 1852 of the Binns Collection of Lancashire Maps, Drawings and Sketches already mentioned, has been a sort of magnetic centre drawing to itself during the past fifty years everything in the way of books and documents which could be acquired calculated to illustrate the County Palatine. With these influences at work on the purchase of books it will be seen that while the library appeals to students of all subjects it appeals most of all to those whose researches and studies lie in the domain of natural history, the fine arts and antiquities, and in a more subordinate degree to the student of the mechanical arts, and local history and topography.

The Picton Reading Room being now completed the inaugural ceremony was fixed for the 8th October. The day was an important one in the history of the library, for the opening of this magnificent room, with its additional accommodation for books and readers, was destined to be attended with the same great developing results on the work of the Brown Library as the opening of the Brown Library had on the work of the old library, when domiciled in the premises of the Union News Room, in Duke Street. In some respects even more so, as it has since, by its general arrangements and facilities for study, attracted to it a numerous body of readers, whose object and purpose make the assertion that free libraries are the universities of the people more than a mere figure of speech.

The weather, on the day fixed for the formal opening of the Picton Reading Room, was all that could be desired: a factor by no means unimportant, in enabling the arrangements made for the ceremony to be carried out in a way calculated to add materially to the pleasure and *éclat* of the day's proceedings. At a quarter to three o'clock, the Mayor, Mr. T. B. Royden, the Town Clerk, Members of the Town Council, and many leading citizens assembled in the great hall of the Museum, and noticeable among them were: Mr. J. A. Picton, The Mayor of Bootle (Mr. Newell), Sir A. B. Walker, Mr. A. B. Forwood, Mr. Robert D. Holt, Mr. C. T. Bowring, Alderman Samuelson, Mr. P. H. Rathbone, Mr. William Crosfield, Mr. Thomas Hughes, Mr. Thomas Holder, Mr. W. Oulton, the Rev. H. H. Higgins, the Rev. Charles Beard, Dr. W. H. Dallinger, Mr. E. R. Russell, Mr. David Radcliffe, Mr. G. G. Walmsley, Alderman Bennett, Mr. Henry Tate, Mr. W. J. Lunt, Mr. John Yates, Mr. T. J. Moore, Mr. Charles Dyall, and Mr. Peter Cowell.

At three o'clock a procession was formed, headed by the Mayor in his robes of office, and officials bearing the Corporation regalia, and leaving the Museum, proceeded up William Brown Street to the main entrance of the Picton Reading Room.

The large crowd of spectators which had gathered in front of the building greeted the gentleman whom the town had delighted to honour, with respectful and hearty cheers. At

the entrance to the Picton Reading Room, the architect, Mr. Sherlock, received the Mayor, and addressing him said: "As architect of this building, I have been requested by the Library Committee, as representing the Town Council, to present you with this ornamental key for the purpose of opening it; and, I trust, worshipful sir, you will find the building suitable for the purpose for which it was designed, and no disgrace to the town, of which you are the chief magistrate, and over which you so ably preside."

Having received the key, and the door being opened, the Mayor proceeded to a raised dais, having Mr. Picton, Mr. A. B. Forwood, and Mr. P. H. Rathbone on his right, and on his left, Alderman Samuelson and the Town Clerk. The Mayor then arose, and said: "I have a very pleasing duty to perform to-day, especially pleasing when we consider the circumstances that surround it. Through the liberality of an eminent merchant of Liverpool, Sir William Brown, the town was provided with a very handsome library and museum; and through the liberality of another gentleman, who is present to-day—Sir Andrew Walker—we were provided, on the other hand, with an art gallery which will, I trust, with the collection of pictures from time to time presented by generous donors, be worthy of the town in which it is situated. In the Brown Museum we also have other collections of donations which have been made by generous men, principally by Lord Derby and Mr. Mayer. That, too, is a

matter of congratulation to the town, from the priceless value of some of the articles the museum contains. But what we have to do to-day is more especially with regard to the reading room in which we are assembled. I trust our fellow townsmen will show their appreciation of what has been done for them, and that many will by this means find instruction, and a course of reading which will lead them to a higher life, and show them that there is far more worth living for than the mere indulgence of sensual pleasures. The special circumstances of to-day's proceedings, which we view with so much pleasure, is that this beautiful building, which has been erected at the sole expense of the Corporation, is about to take the name of him who has so worthily filled the office of Chairman of the Library, Museum, and Arts Committee for something like a quarter of a century. It is an honour very seldom paid to any gentleman connected with the Corporation, and we feel that that honour could not be more worthily bestowed than when it is placed on the shoulders of Mr. Picton. I am sure he will esteem that honour more than any other; because it will carry down his name linked with a great work, which has been the object of his life. Mr. Picton, I congratulate you on the honour which the town has done you by calling this building the Picton Reading Room. I now, as a matter of duty, declare the Picton Reading Room open, and I trust it will add much to the welfare and happiness of those classes for whom it is intended."



Mr. Sherlock here introduced Mr. Cowell, the Chief Librarian of the Corporation, who handed to Mr. Picton an elegantly designed silver key in a handsome case, the key being commemorative of the opening of the reading room.

Mr. Alderman Samuelson then addressed the audience, and, having described in detail the progress of the library movement in Liverpool and its present success, referred in complimentary terms to Mr. Picton's services during the past twenty-five years, uncovered a brass tablet bearing the following inscription:—

“This building, erected by the Corporation of Liverpool, was, by a resolution of the Council dated the 6th October, 1876, ordered to be named the Picton Reading Room, in recognition of the valuable services rendered by James Allanson Picton, F.S.A., in his capacity as Chairman of the Public Library, Museum, and Art Gallery, which position he has occupied for a period extending over a quarter of a century.”

Mr. Picton rose, and after the greetings with which he was received had subsided, said: “I have to congratulate the Council and the town on the completion of another stage in the history of this institution. The occasion is one to suggest a variety of thoughts, both retrospective and prospective. Thankfulness of past success mingles with anticipations of future progress. Some reflections also naturally arise on the scope and aim of the objects to be carried out within these walls. A fortnight since, Mr. Mayor, you gave a right hospitable reception in the adjoining building to the members of the Iron and Steel

Institute. At the meeting of that association it fell to my lot, not exactly to sing, but, at all events, to sound the praises of iron and steel as constructive materials. I traced them in the mighty works of the railway, the steam engine, the ironclad, the steam forge hammer, the bridge, the viaduct; but there was one little implement which was not mentioned, but ought to have been, which is mightier than them all—I mean the steel pen. It is mightier than them all, because it is the representative, the medium for translating thoughts that breathe into words that burn. Look round on the vast array of books that crowd these shelves. They are the exponents of the best thoughts of the noblest men of all ages and nations. They are the steps by which we rise from barbarism to civilisation, the aliment of the mind, which has now become so essential to the existence of modern society that it is like the air we breathe—if we have it not we die. Liverpool, I am proud to say, has become alive to the importance of the cultivation of literature, science, and art. In this she has done wisely. At the beginning of the last century, Lancashire was the most backward county in England, and Liverpool was about the most backward town in Lancashire. Small, ill-built, and poverty-stricken, its emergence seemed all but hopeless. Manchester had its fine old church with its collegiate establishment, its Cheetham Library, and its noble grammar school. Liverpool had only a wretched little parochial chapel, and a free school with an

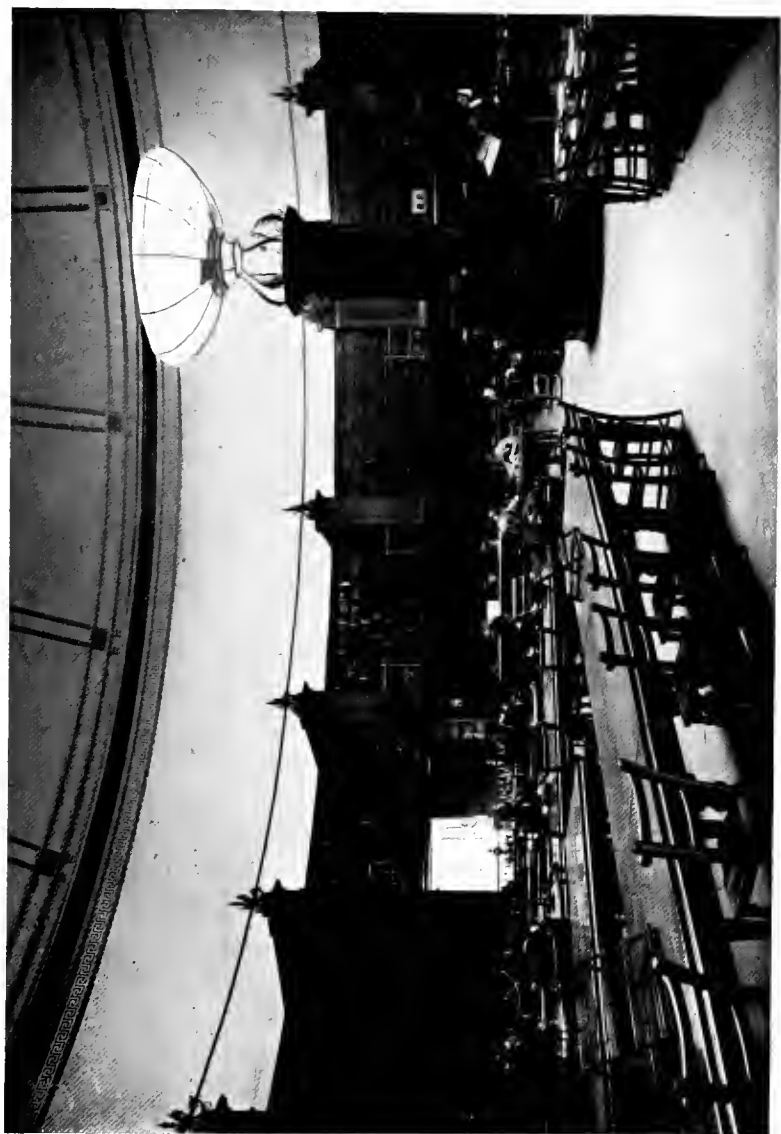
endowment of £6 13s. 4d. per annum, and no other endowment of any kind. We have had a great deal to do in bringing up lost ground; but we have reached a certain standpoint, and it is incumbent on us to go forward. So far we have arrived with success; but we are far from having reached perfection. There is still much to be done in educating the people in science, literature, and art. Our Art Gallery wants enlarging, to provide for our accumulating treasures and for the permanent collection, without interfering with the annual exhibition. The Mayer collection requires more space for its development. The noble lecture hall below the reading room requires finishing and fitting up. These are works not belonging to any exclusive class; but are the property of all, for the use of all, and should be maintained by all. I congratulate the town on the acquisition of so beautiful a building, which does credit to its architect and builder. It is here that the electric light will first be displayed in any public building in Liverpool. I trust this light will be an emblem of the light of knowledge and truth which will be disseminated from this centre to quicken and vivify the minds of the population around."

At the close of Mr. Picton's speech a beautifully illuminated address was presented to him from the Architectural Society by Mr. Henry Sumner, its president. It was signed by the principal architects of the town, and referred in appreciative terms to the obligations Mr. Picton had conferred

on the town by his intellectual culture and scholarly research displayed in his communications to various learned societies, in his *Memorials of Liverpool*, and in his services to the Liverpool Architectural Society in fostering its growth and development.

To give a circular form to the Picton Reading Room was a happy conception, for in so doing the angles between the Brown Library and Museum on the one side, and the Walker Art Gallery on the other, were softened and made pleasing by the curve of its broad and imposing front. The style of the building is of the Corinthian order of classical architecture. The front facing William Brown Street is rendered graceful and dignified by its colonnade of eighteen fluted columns. The plainness of the front wall is relieved by a series of niches intended for sculpture. The cornice surmounting the colonnade is decorated by a frieze consisting of a floriated scroll design, and above the cornices is a low balustrade, which acts in a great measure as a screen to the roof. Much of the plainness of the domed roof, where seen, is removed by a metal corona.

The whole design consists of a single chamber 100 feet in diameter, and 60 feet high from the floor to the centre of the roof. The total absence of columns or visible girders in support of the roof renders the internal vista of the room very effective. Oak shelving 8 feet high runs round its entire circumference. From this spring at equal distances 16 projecting book cases; but



PICTON READING ROOM.



thrust forward so as to allow of a working passage for the staff between the wing cases and the wall shelving.

Above the shelving runs an ornamental iron gallery, with wall and projecting book cases above it similar in design to those below. About 60,000 volumes are thus accommodated, very many being large quartos and folios. The room by day is effectively lighted from the centre of the domed roof by a circular skylight 24 feet in diameter, and by night by means of four electric arc lamps, each of 2,500 candle power, placed on top of an ornamental oak column in the centre of the room. The powerful glare of the lamps is softened and made agreeable by being screened in a kind of inverted umbrella of opal glass.

The reading tables radiate like the spokes of an immense wheel. By this arrangement the light falls on them entirely free from interruptive shadows.

The basement of the Picton Reading Room has been made into a lecture theatre, with the same area as the reading room above. The seats are cut out of the solid rock. Its shape is that of a horseshoe, with the seats rising amphitheatrewise from the floor. The platform coincides with the heels of the horseshoe. The roof of the hall, which is the floor of the Picton Reading Room, is supported by immense iron brackets springing from the circular wall, consequently the large hall is free from columns obstructing the view of the platform—a feature

which makes it appreciated for illustrated lectures or public meetings of any kind. Its seating capacity is 1,200.

Its inauguration as a public hall took place on the 3rd January, 1882, when Sir James Picton delivered the first of the seventeenth annual series of free lectures connected with the library, entitled "Our Municipal Institutions." At this time the hall was called the Rotunda Lecture Hall from its circular construction; but owing to it being frequently identified with the Rotunda Theatre, the name was altered to Picton Lecture Hall—a name which was an easy transition, as it had always been more or less called by it.

The opening of the Picton Reading Room infused much new life into the management and working of the library. Its previous congested state prevented much educational work being accomplished through want of reading accommodation, and the quiet necessary to make study effective. The acquisition of such an extension of the library gave immediate opportunity for a better arrangement of the books and improving its general administration. The students' room had ceased to be such, except in name, by reason of its small size and the hum and movement which prevailed in it, caused by the numerous body of readers who, by special application, had secured the right of using it. A general business room was much wanted, and as it had long been felt that there was much invidiousness in issuing tickets to people who merely called themselves students, without having any other claim to



the distinction, it was decided by the Committee, on the suggestion of the present chief librarian, to make the Picton Reading Room the students' room, and administer it on the same lines as it is to-day. Henceforth the new room would be perfectly free to every one whose personal appearance could not be called in question. No novels would be issued, nor periodicals of the light and entertaining class. Pens and ink would be provided to facilitate literary work, no limit within reason would be placed on the number of books required at one time, and valuable and important books would be made accessible to those who had a decided educational object in view. To atlases and a large selection of literary and scientific magazines and reviews, the public have always had free access, and more recently to a large selection of books of general reference, and of books recently published on subjects of general interest and utility.

It would be an error to suppose that because students and literary readers receive much consideration in the arrangements and regulations of the Picton Reading Room, the requirements of the less educated readers are neglected and overlooked. The almost ever crowded state of the general reading room of the Brown Library amply disprove any such supposition. The Library Committee have always been sensible of the importance of attracting to the library the more illiterate of the working classes, and in this they have undoubtedly been successful. The Brown Reading Room is 110 feet long by

50 feet broad. It is comfortably seated, well lighted during the day, and by electricity at night. A number of attractive pictures contribute to its general cheerfulness, and an effective scheme of ventilation, which changes the atmosphere every few minutes, keeps the room equal to the requirements of a body of readers which commonly exceeds 400. The room for general reading purposes is supplied with a large number of the leading British newspapers, and some 90 British and foreign directories attract the frequent visits of the commercial classes.

Illustrated papers and popular magazines are liberally provided, and there are available for all those whose reading lies in that direction an extensive collection of the best works in English prose fiction.

From this it will be evident why the Brown Reading Room is so much better attended than the Picton Reading Room. It is, however, to be regretted that a constant assemblage of a large body of labouring men during business hours, engaged in the perusal of a literature which is popular rather than educational, is not regarded by very many persons with the favour which, on the whole, it deserves. And this disfavour, unfortunately, frequently extends to the institution. A little thought must make it obvious that, apart from the advantages which always, more or less, accrue from reading, the community at large must be benefited by the quiet, orderly conduct of men who might dispose of their time in a much less commendable manner.

## CHAPTER XII.

### PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL BRANCH LIBRARIES. KENSINGTON BRANCH OPENED.

THE extension of the Reference Library by the erection of the Picton Reading Room, and the greatly increased facilities afforded therein for literary work and study, seemed but to whet the public appetite for similar facilities in other parts of the city. The large population which inhabited the vast network of streets eastward, entitled the claim for a branch library (which at this time was more pressingly preferred from this locality) to the fullest consideration, seeing that branch libraries had been established in the North and South ends of the city many years previously, and that an East branch had from time to time been considered by the Committee from as early as 1857. This general desire for additional libraries and reading rooms was brought into prominence in October, 1879, by a deputation from Toxteth Park, which waited upon the Library Committee to urge the desirability of opening one or more public reading rooms in that populous district. The deputation, which was introduced by Councillor Arthur B. Forwood, included the following representative citizens: Councillors Thomas Hughes, William Radcliffe,

and Joseph Ball, and the Rev. J. H. Honeyburne, the Rev. Henry Postance, Mr. W. P. Lockhart, and others. After the deputation had expressed the object and purpose of their visit, the Chairman of the Library Committee, in reply, drew attention to the fact that the whole of their income was absorbed in the maintenance of the present institutions, and that additional ones could only be established and maintained by some increase of the library rate, or by curtailing some portion of the useful work in which they were already engaged. The result of this interview, coupled with other influences and expressions of opinion, was that in June, 1880, the Chief Librarian was instructed to "prepare an estimate of the cost of establishing in the eastern part of the city a free lending library, and to report how the Board Schools of the city could be adapted for the purposes of evening reading rooms, open from 6 to 9."

This report was duly prepared and submitted to the Committee. After giving a brief history of the existing branch libraries, and some account of the branch libraries of Manchester and Birmingham, and of the school reading rooms of Leeds and Bradford, it concluded by recommending the establishment of a branch library and reading room in West Derby Road, and four school reading rooms in Stanley Road, Chatsworth Street, Heyworth Street, and High Park Street.

Owing to financial difficulties, and to some extent, possibly, to a want of sympathy on the

part of the Chairman of the Library Committee, it was not until 1884 that five school reading rooms were opened, and not until 1890 that the East Branch Lending Library and Reading Room was erected, and its advantages made available. It must not be overlooked, and it is in many respects greatly to the advantage of the city, that the aim and absorbing idea of Sir James Picton was to build up a great reference library, not in number of volumes merely, but great in its literary and scientific importance and value. How successfully he achieved this is only known to those whose studies have made them intimately acquainted with the library.

The school reading rooms opened in 1884 did not coincide wholly with those mentioned in the Librarian's report. Several modifications had to be made in the original proposals. They were eventually opened in the Board Schools, Stanley Road, Queen's Road, and Chatsworth Street, and the Church Schools of St. John the Baptist, Wellington Road, and St. Jude's, Low Hill. The acquisition of the Board Schools for reading room purposes was much facilitated by the warm interest taken in this new departure of the Library Committee by the Chairman of the School Board, Mr. Samuel Greg Rathbone. In connection with the same object and purpose, it is right to record the sympathetic and active interest of Mr. W. J. Stewart (the present Stipendiary Magistrate), Mr. T. B. Hall, and the late Alderman W. J. Lunt, all of whom were then members of the Library Committee.

These reading rooms now only number three. In consequence of the erection of the Kensington and Everton Branch Libraries, with their commodious reading rooms, it was not found necessary to continue the Low Hill and Queen's Road rooms on account of their proximity. With the exception of Stanley Road none of these rooms, from the point of view of attendance, has ever been a success. School desks and other furniture prevent the supply of an adequate number of tables and chairs to make the room attractive and comfortable, consequently there is little or no inducement to working men to make more than a brief stay.

Up to 1883 the Liverpool Public Library was, it is believed, quite exceptional among municipal libraries in the non-provision of newspapers; but in this year, on the motion of the Chairman, the committee unanimously decided to remedy this, and the Librarian was instructed to make arrangements in the Brown Reading Room for the suitable display of the chief London and Provincial papers. The London *Times* and the local newspapers had from the foundation of the library been filed and bound for reference purposes; but the supply of newspapers for general reading, such as was now contemplated and about to be carried out, was altogether a new departure. The popularity of the newspaper department in other public libraries was uniform, and there was no reason to suppose that such a department would be less so here than elsewhere. If any vindication of the provision of newspapers

were needed, it was urged that they were useful for commercial purposes, valuable as a means of education in imperial and local politics, and that their perusal led to the reading of a literature more solid and continuous in character.

In 1883 the Library Association of the United Kingdom held their annual conference in the small lecture hall of the Brown Library, under the presidency of Sir James A. Picton. Many interesting papers, principally on libraries and library work, were read and discussed, and the meeting, which was attended in larger numbers than any previous one, was regarded as eminently successful and profitable. An exhibition of book-binding and library appliances, held at the same time, illustrated the practical side of librarianship.

It is not difficult to prove to the dullest comprehension that the up-keep of a group of palatial buildings like the Library, Museum, and Art Gallery in William Brown Street is costly. As one year after another passes by, repairs to the fabric multiply. In the library the increase of books is followed by an increase of the binding account, and from time to time with an increase in book shelving. This in turn requires additional lighting, and so, little by little, the permanent expenses increase. Energetic administration prevents sleepiness and fossilization; but it does not prevent the growth of expense. This comes more or less without the seeking of "fresh woods and pastures new" to provide the cause.

The perusal of the Annual Report for 1885 shows how the several institutions—Libraries,

Museum, and Art Gallery—have developed the scope of their usefulness, and, in consequence, increased the cost of the annual maintenance. The extension of the Walker Art Gallery by Sir Andrew Walker, the circulation among the elementary schools of boxes of natural history specimens from the museum, the introduction of newspapers in the library, the substitution of electricity for gas in the library for general lighting purposes, and the opening of five evening reading rooms, have obviously added materially to the permanent expenses. From these and other causes the question of ways and means began now to press upon the attention of the committee in a way that called for an early remedy. Accordingly on the 20th October, 1886, Sir James Picton moved, at a meeting of the City Council, that the library rate be increased to 1½d. in the pound. This was seconded by Sir William Forwood. On an amendment being proposed that the increase be to 1¼d., it was carried. At a meeting of ratepayers in the Town Hall, on October 28th, under the Borough Funds' Act, even this very moderate increase was rejected, notwithstanding the strong support given to it by Sir William Forwood and others. In the Library Report of the following year, the financial position of the Committee is referred to somewhat lengthily by the Chairman, of which the following may be quoted:—

“The institution has been hitherto maintained by a rate of a penny in the pound, supplemented by occasional grants from the surplus funds of



the city. As no surplus at present exists, no aid from that quarter can be looked for, whilst in consequence of an alteration in the mode of collection, the income from the rate is likely to diminish rather than increase. During the past year the expenditure was £13,458, whilst the income from the rate only amounted to £12,602 14s. 8d., leaving a deficiency of £856. It was evident, therefore, that some steps had to be taken, either to diminish the expenditure—which really means to cripple the usefulness of the institution—or to find some method of increasing the income. Following in the steps of Birmingham, Nottingham, and other towns, the Committee proposed to the Council to introduce into a local Bill now pending in Parliament, power to increase the rate when the Council should deem it necessary to 1½d. in the pound. When this proposition was laid before the Council the power was cut down to 1¼d., and when subsequently under the Borough Funds' Act, the Bill was remitted to a Ratepayers' Meeting, the clause was struck out altogether. The only alternative, therefore, is to reduce the expenditure, which might be done either by striking off some branches which might not be considered essential, or by cutting down the expenditure all round. Suggestions were made to abandon the lending libraries, to close the reading rooms, or to give up the lectures; but the committee, after serious and anxious consideration, are unwilling to curtail the usefulness and restrict the operations which have been so successful until compelled by absolute necessity to do so. They

have, therefore, determined to persevere for the present, at least, in maintaining every branch in its integrity. They cannot, of course, exceed the amount allotted by vote of the Council, and the experience of the coming year will determine their course in the future. The standing expenses of maintenance, salaries, lighting, cleaning, rates and taxes, &c., cannot be reduced. Unfortunately, any reduction has to come off that portion of the expenditure which is the life-blood of the institution, viz., the purchase of books in the libraries, and of specimens in the museums."

The refusal of the ratepayers to sanction any increase of the library rate was keenly felt by the Chairman of the Library Committee, as seeming to show a want of appreciation of their own institutions and of their educational work. He, however, loyally accepted the situation, and determined to remain at the helm of affairs, and wait and hope for the means and opportunity in the future to carry out those structural extensions and improvements in the buildings, which would conduce so much to their efficiency and usefulness. Unfortunately, during the following four years the Committee had the unpleasantness to contend with a diminishing income, and an expenditure with every tendency to increase.

That this diminution of income was a fact, stern and real, the following annual yield of the library rate during 1887-1890 conclusively shows: £12,708, £12,226, £11,253, £10,671. The turn of the financial tide eventually came, and the flood which led to many improvements and

developments in the work of the institutions; but it was not the destiny of Sir James Picton to see them carried out or even begun.

On the 15th July, 1889, the Chairman of the Library, Museum, and Arts Committee, after 40 years devoted service to the institutions he loved so well, was called to his rest, and to let another take the duties of the office he had so long excellently fulfilled. Honoured by his sovereign and by his fellow citizens, successful in life, and favoured by length of days, he passed away, leaving the record of a life illustrative of integrity and high-minded citizenship, and valuable as an encouragement and an example to youth.

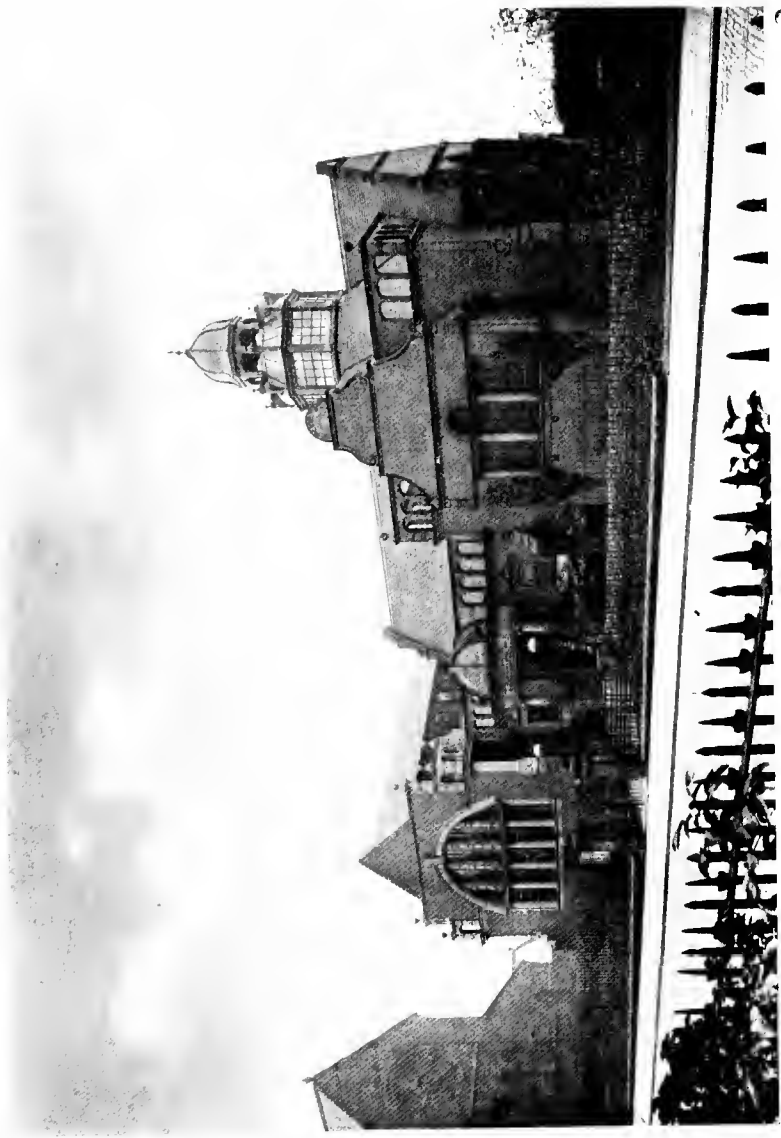
On the demise of Sir James Picton, the choice of the Library, Museum, and Arts Committee as to his successor fell upon the Deputy-Chairman, Alderman Samuelson, whose long and active service in the further capacity of Chairman of the Arts Sub-Committee gave him almost a prescriptive right to the position, the Committee unanimously elected him. To him the credit must be given of having initiated the Free Lectures, and later, the Autumn Exhibition of Pictures, which, under his direction and with the able support of Mr. Philip H. Rathbone, gained a reputation and success which they have since retained.

In a little more than twelve months, it has to be regretfully recorded, failing health compelled him to resign, and leave to others the duties he felt himself no longer capable of discharging with his accustomed zeal and energy.

The principal event in the history of the libraries during his brief term of office, was the opening of a branch library and reading room for the eastern part of the city in Kensington. The reason of this change of site from West Derby Road, as originally recommended, to Kensington becomes obvious from the following resolution of the City Council on the 1st August, 1888, and more particularly from the fact that the site mentioned was granted free of charge by the Parks and Gardens Committee, with the sanction of the City Council:—

That the sum of £3,000 be appropriated out of the capital personal estate of the Corporation for the purpose of erecting a building to be used during the pleasure of the Council as a lending library, upon part of the Kensington Recreation Ground, according to the plans approved by the Council on the 4th July, 1888, and that there be paid into the City fund out of such part of the income under the control of the Library, Museum, and Arts Committee as does not arise from the Library and Museum rate, the sum of £150 per annum, so long as such building is used for a lending library."

This site was in every way eligible, and in some respects much superior to that previously suggested. It was in the midst of a large and increasing population, and offered the opportunity for the erection of a building which by position would attract attention and advertise its mission of usefulness. A building, ornate in style and admirably convenient, was designed and erected by the City Surveyor, Mr. Thomas Shelmerdine, the plan and internal arrangements being the outcome of the suggestions of the Chief Librarian.



KENSINGTON BRANCH LIBRARY.



The warm interest which Sir Thomas Hughes had for many years taken in the extension of branch libraries and reading rooms, made the opening of this first branch library and reading room, specially designed, with up to date equipment, during his term of office as Mayor, somewhat auspicious. The inaugural ceremony took place on Thursday, 30th January, 1890, in the presence of many members of the City Council and leading citizens. Alderman Samuelson (Chairman of the Library, Museum, and Arts Committee) presided, and in addition to his Worship the Mayor, may be mentioned Principal Rendall, the Revs. W. H. Harpur, R. H. Lundie, H. H. Higgins, T. B. Hardern, and Father Kennedy, Alderman W. J. Lunt, Alderman William Radcliffe, Councillors Thomas Holder, P. H. Rathbone, J. Miles, J. B. Morgan, Dr. Commins, Mr. T. B. Hall, Mr. J. Armour, Mr. Isaac Turner, and others.

The Chairman, on opening the proceedings, said: "They all profoundly regretted the absence of Sir A. B. Walker, who was confined within doors by an attack of influenza. Sir Andrew took the liveliest interest in everything concerning the educational institutions of Liverpool, and had been for many years a valued member of the Corporation. It was equally a matter of regret that their lamented friend Sir James Picton had not been spared to witness the completion of that undertaking. Sir James loved the free libraries of the city, and it would be the aim of that committee to continue and develop the usefulness

of these institutions which he so fondly cherished. Of late years increased obligations had been cast upon them to provide for the educational wants of the masses; but their greatest obstacle was the question of ways and means. The Library Committee intended to look cheerfully to the future, and they appealed to the public to support them in their endeavours, because it depended entirely upon the public whether they were to remain contented with what they had already done, or whether they should increase the number of institutions of this useful character. Politicians might try to utilise the question of the amelioration of the masses for the purposes of party advantage; but in his opinion the industrial classes had had quite enough of being patted on the back. Their duty was to give the workingmen opportunities of education, and thus enable them to think for themselves, and he was glad to say that that would be done in the institution which they were now opening." The Chairman concluded by complimenting the City Surveyor and the Librarian upon the manner in which their duties in connection with the new institution had been discharged.

Mr. Shelmerdine then presented to the Mayor a gold key of the building, bearing a suitable inscription, and Mr. Cowell handed to his Worship an elegantly bound copy of the catalogue.

The Mayor, who was heartily applauded, said "it was most gratifying to him to witness the final stage of that important undertaking, and to



be allowed to declare the library open. He was proud to declare the library open. He was proud to think he had rendered some service in impressing upon the Library Committee the desirability of extending the usefulness of the central institution by founding branch libraries all over the city. The imposition of a penny library rate was designed not so much to serve the rich as to benefit the poor, who were denied the advantage of having libraries at home; and he considered it a wise policy on the part of the committee not to concentrate their attention solely upon the central library; but to take the advantages of education as it were to the very homes of the industrial classes in various parts of the city. The establishment of this new library was a step in the right direction. The very atmosphere of the building must have a tendency to raise the tone of those who frequented it, and his earnest hope was that it was only the beginning of a very extensive movement. Instead of two or three branch libraries, he wished to see the number increased to a dozen, and he was convinced that the economists of the Council would be satisfied as to the wisdom of such an expenditure if the present venture were only appreciated by the public to the extent that it deserved. From an educational point of view, they had every reason to be proud of Liverpool. The elementary schools were giving a higher standard of education than was generally afforded in such institutions; the intermediate schools and University College were pursuing a career

of great usefulness, and the Library Committee were not behindhand in their efforts to advance the good work."

Principal Rendall briefly addressed the company, and said that "of all municipal movements the present one commanded his entire sympathy, and he heartily congratulated the public of Liverpool on the enterprise and courage and faith by which the scheme had been carried into effect. Libraries were amongst the greatest privileges of life, and he confidently believed that the new institution would never be lacking in usefulness."

Mr. Thomas Holder, in moving a vote of thanks to the Mayor, said that "Liverpool was far behind Manchester and many Continental and American cities in the matter of branch libraries. He trusted that this reproach would soon be wiped away, and that Liverpool by extending her free libraries would do something to foster amongst the working classes a taste for intellectual pleasures."

Alderman W. J. Lunt seconded the motion, which was carried, and the Mayor, in acknowledgment, paid a warm tribute to Mr. T. B. Hall, who, he said, took the greatest interest in the work in its early stage, and gave valuable assistance to the committee.

The doors of this library were scarcely thrown open to the public before it became conspicuously apparent that, to use a journalistic phrase, it supplied a long felt want. The lending library, consisting of some 8,000 new and well selected volumes, soon drew such a number of borrowers



KENSINGTON BRANCH LIBRARY.  
General Reading Room.



that its resources were speedily taxed to the utmost, and the daily attendance in the reading room, particularly in the evening, gave no less evidence of its appreciation. At the close of the first year the statistics of readers and book issues stood thus:—

Readers	- - - - -	3,968
Volumes issued	- - - - -	140,348

It soon became evident that the library had an important fault, it was much too small to accommodate in its reading room the number of adults and young people of both sexes who wished to avail themselves of its advantages.

The lapse of time and growth of population only served to emphasise this grave defect. So in 1897 the committee determined to extend the library by building a new general reading room some 66 feet long by 28 feet broad. This was carried out by the City Surveyor with considerable architectural skill and taste. Again the Library Committee was indebted to the Parks and Gardens Committee, and to its Chairman, Alderman Ball, for the additional land necessary to make this important and much needed extension of the library.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### FOUR NEW BRANCH LIBRARIES OPENED. THE HORNEY BEQUEST.

AMONG the events which carry with them important consequences in connection with the history of the Liverpool Public Libraries is the election of Sir William Bower Forwood to fill the chair vacated by the resignation of Alderman Samuelson. Sir William's connection with the Library Committee dates back as early as 1868, and although various municipal duties had prevented his connection with it being continuous and unbroken, the work of the committee had always his sympathetic regard and active co-operation.

On more than one occasion, when lecturing was less the vogue than at present, he delivered lectures in connection with the winter free series in the hall of the Brown Library. That given by him, on March 14th, 1876, on the subject of "Arctic Exploration: its heroes and their discoveries," was one of the earliest to be illustrated by lantern slides.

The election of Sir William to the position of Chairman of the General Committee ushered in a forward administrative policy. His desire,

often expressed, was to popularise the institutions to a greater extent than hitherto, and in this he had the cordial co-operation of the committee and official managers. Two things will always be associated with his name—the increase in number, size, and attractiveness of the new branch libraries and reading rooms, and the magnificent extension of the Museum as part of the Technical School buildings. There is yet a looked-for third, which it is hoped may be connected with his name, the much needed enlargement of the Walker Art Gallery.

The congested state of the Reference Library in 1892 made additional book storage imperative. This was obtained by a reconstruction of the basement of the Brown Library. Here a complete transformation was effected, and an area brought into requisition which provided excellent storage for the voluminous collections of newspapers and specifications of patents, and also a light and commodious reading room to the front of the building with its own separate entrance, where the numerous body of readers who came to consult them could do so with facility and comfort.

A large library is much in the nature of a wilderness of books, without roads or signposts, unless a guide is provided, in the shape of a well-planned catalogue.

The Library Committee was early sensible of this fact, and sought to provide a key to the Reference Library which should unlock it to the ordinary reader easily and effectively. This

catalogue, the first volume of which was published in 1872, is deserving of some notice, as it was, it is believed, the first catalogue printed in this country after its particular plan and arrangement. It may be briefly described as a dictionary catalogue, with the books entered in it in alphabetical order under author and subject, and in cases where considered necessary under title as well. Further, it is largely analytical, setting forth and indexing under its own particular subject the contents of all collected works.

In 1892 a vote of £1,600 from the funds accruing under the Customs and Excise Act, enabled the Reference and Branch Libraries to be brought up to date and largely augmented in technical books. The importance and number of these books led to the suggestion of printing a handlist of them, and circulating it gratuitously among the workshops of the city. An edition of 5,000 copies was printed and distributed accordingly. The result was eminently satisfactory, for the statistics of the issue of such books during the next twelve months showed an increase of 10,592 volumes. Owing to the admirable way this little volume served its purpose it became the pioneer of several similar handlists, all of which have proved valuable in making known the important technical side of the Reference Library.

It was felt by those students and readers to whom the special catalogues most strongly appealed, that the mere titles of the works there given were to them names and nothing more, and





*Photo. by Medrington.*

SIR WILLIAM B. FORWOOD, D.L., J.P.



that it would be an education in itself if they could have the opportunity of becoming acquainted with the nature and scope of these valuable and important books, so many of which were of foreign origin. In sympathy with this feeling, and with the desire to extend the advantages of the library to the fullest, a series of exhibitions were inaugurated of these books. Artists, architects, decorators, workers in wood and metal expressed their unbounded pleasure with the numerous high-class works displayed for their benefit, and their note books gave evidence that it was not their intention to confine themselves to the mere superficial inspection which these occasions only enabled them to make—a resolution which the statistics of the book issues afterwards fully confirmed.

Among the special catalogues published from time to time by the Library Committee, perhaps none are more commendable in their object than those of books adapted for juvenile readers. The field of literature for the young alone is so extensive that it cannot be expected that parents are capable in all cases, even if they had the time and the will, to exercise that supervision over their children's reading which is desirable.

That every effort should be made to induce the young to read, and to create in them an appetite and a taste for reading goes without saying; but in so doing the character of the reading, which is of paramount importance, should be carefully considered by those who are responsible for its provision. With a due sense

of this responsibility, the committee have not only provided in their newer branch libraries special rooms for their juvenile readers, but have made a selection of books attractive and healthy in tone and subject, to which their reading, while in the library, is wholly confined.

It seemed almost anomalous that with the establishment of lending libraries in the North, South, and East parts of the city, there should be no central lending library in connection with the reference department. From time to time the want of such a library had been brought under the notice of the committee; but the subject had always been deferred on account of the structural alterations which such a library would involve in its formation, and their consequent cost. The successful adaptation in 1892 of a part of technically the basement, but really the ground floor, of the Brown Library for the purposes of a patent and newspaper library, led to the further reconstruction in 1895 of this part of the building for the purposes of a lending library, and with equally satisfactory results. The success and public appreciation of this further extension of the branch library system is forcibly illustrated by the following figures:—

Number of borrowers at end of first year -	4,477
Volumes issued - - - - -	125,822
Number of borrowers, 31st December, 1902	7,311
Volumes issued in 1902 - - - - -	229,498

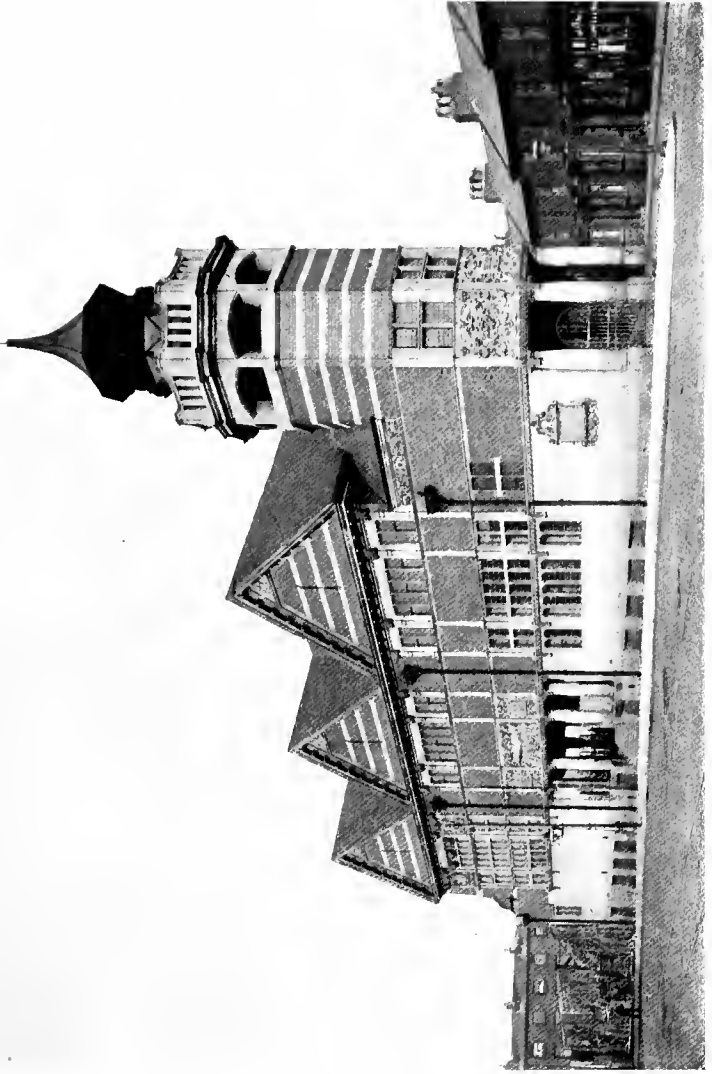
When in 1855 the old North Lending Library, originally opened in the North Corporation School, Bevington Bush, was removed to premises

in Great Nelson Street, this new home was considered to be suitably situated, and quite northern enough from the centre of the city. When, however, in later years the districts of Everton and Kirkdale became in point of population large towns in themselves, it was felt that the library should follow this great northward migration and seek a better and greater centre for its educational work.

With the time and opportunity came also the determination to erect in Everton a library in harmony with the latest ideas of what such an institution should be. Plans and drawings were accordingly prepared by the City Surveyor, in conjunction with the Chief Librarian, and on the 5th July, 1895, the foundation stone was laid by the Lord Mayor, Alderman Watts, in the absence of Lord Stanley, who at the last moment had been prevented from performing that ceremony. Among those present on the occasion, the following members of the City Council and other gentlemen may be mentioned:—Sir William Forwood, Mr. John Willox, M.P., Mr. T. Snape, M.P., Dr. Andrew Commins, M.P.; Aldermen Bowring, Thomas Hughes, Grindley, and Radcliffe; Councillors R. D. Holt, Austin Taylor, W. J. Burgess, W. E. Willink, W. H. Picton, J. Houlding, &c.; the Rev. Canon Major Lester, the Rev. Canon Armour, and others.

Sir William Forwood remarked "that he regretted very much to say that Lord Stanley could not be present. A telegram had been received saying that owing to a very urgent

Parliamentary business he was unable to leave London. Lord Stanley had been appointed one of the Lords of the Treasury under the new Administration, and he presumed that the duties of the office required his lordship's presence during the political crisis. He (Sir William) had it from Lord Stanley's own lips that he desired to identify himself with every good work that would promote the welfare of Liverpool, and he had been looking forward with very great pleasure to be connected with that new Everton library. It would be very gratifying to the people of Liverpool to know that his lordship was particularly anxious to follow in the footsteps of his predecessors in identifying himself with the welfare and prosperity of the city. In Lord Stanley's absence they had an excellent substitute in the Lord Mayor, who would lay the foundation stone. They were about to erect upon that site an additional free lending library in connection with the city, and this so recently after the one opened only last week at the central buildings in William Brown Street. They trusted to go further forward with this work, and before another twelve months had passed they hoped that they might be able to lay the foundation stone of a new library at the South end. Technical instruction in Liverpool, under the very able guidance of Mr. Willink, was making very rapid progress, and they had great difficulty in finding accommodation for the pupils. They hoped to relieve the pressure to some extent by having classes within that institution, and arrangements had been made to provide laboratories and



EVERTON BRANCH LIBRARY.





class-rooms. By bringing technical education to the doors of the people they would be conferring upon them a great boon. In that district, where once the merchant princes of Liverpool resided, there was now a teeming population composed generally of clerks, artisans, and small tradesmen—men of education who had not the means of providing large libraries for themselves.”

The Lord Mayor having laid the foundation stone, observed that “the future historian of this country would probably look back upon the work of the last half century as marking a very distinct advance in all that related to the civic duty that devolved upon the people. There had been a transference of responsibility from Parliament to municipalities. Very wisely Parliament had thrown back upon the various municipalities a very large portion of the work that appertained to their every-day life. Among these matters nothing was more important than the education of the young. Liverpool at a very early period took that matter in hand, and were almost pioneers in the good work. It had become necessary that the poor should be educated, that the rising generation should be educated, for the three R’s were not sufficient nowadays. It was absolutely necessary that they should have good literature put into their hands, and that their education should be continued after leaving school. Liverpool had felt its responsibility in this direction, and in William Brown Street they had one of the finest institutions of the kind in the country. That institution was availed of to the fullest extent, and during last

year about one and a quarter million of books had been issued. The self-government of the people threw upon them a very large amount of responsibility, and unless the rising generation was educated up to date it was quite clear that they could not be as prosperous as they should be."

Dr. Commins, Chairman of the Library Subcommittee, moved a vote of thanks to the Lord Mayor for his services. "These free libraries," he said, "would be a great factor in the education of not only the young, but also of those who were no longer young. We were a self-governing people, and ought to fit ourselves for the task of self-government."

Mr. Austin Taylor seconded, and remarked that "the laying of that stone and the hoped-for completion of that building would be the inauguration of a new era of intellectual progress for the dense population which surrounded it. There they would be able to hold communion with the great minds of all ages, and to study those monuments of eternal genius, whose loftiness of thought was aptly symbolised by the commanding site which had been chosen for the foundation. If, on the other hand, they desired intellectual recreation, they could still gain something by the study of that interesting product of modern days, the novel, which he might perhaps classify in a fourfold division, as the novel metaphysical, the novel grotesque, the novel with a purpose, and the novel with a yellow back. He would not have them to infer, however, that there was any want of

education or enlightenment in the people of Everton which rendered the provision of that library a peculiar necessity. Rather would he have them to understand that there was that degree of intelligence already active in the minds of those whose lot was cast there as to fit them rightly to appreciate and greatly to enjoy the mental nourishment therein to be provided. They had, by adding dock to dock at the North end of the city, built up a fabric unexampled of its kind of material prosperity. The commercial experience of the generation which had gone before had enabled them to supply an unrivalled system of marine accommodation. But, after all, material prosperity was not everything. It was indeed nothing unless it was a stepping stone to those intellectual endowments and higher characteristics which were the real guarantees of national progress. They trusted in that library to give a mode of access for the huge population, to the organised experience of the race, and in so doing to secure for them the most staple form of intellectual expansion."

A luncheon given to the invited guests by the Chairman of the Library, Museum, and Arts Committee (Sir William Forwood), brought the day's proceedings to a pleasant termination.

On the 9th October, 1896, the Everton Library (replacing the old North Library) was opened by the Right Hon. the Earl of Derby, who that year filled the office of Lord Mayor of Liverpool. The attention of the inhabitants of this locality had been drawn to the institution

intended for their benefit during the course of its erection; but now that it was completed and presented such an attractive appearance, both externally and internally, this interest had by the day when it was to be dedicated to their use, developed into something like enthusiasm. The collection of books was no mean one, for it numbered 25,000 volumes, and these to the thoughtful suggested untold mental pleasures, and drew from the mere casual observer many appreciative comments by their multitudinous ranks, and bindings of varied colours. The old North Library was devoid of reading rooms attached to it. But here there were special rooms for men, women, and boys, all comfortably furnished and otherwise made inviting. Literature in its several forms of books, magazines, and newspapers, could be perused in accordance with individual taste, and quiet happy hours spent wholly removed from deleterious influences. A large number of people assembled to do honour to the occasion, and in appreciation of an institution which was calculated to confer so much social benefit on the inhabitants of the neighbourhood. Among those present were Lord Derby, Sir Willam Forwood, Councillor Robert D. Holt, Mr. A. F. Warr, M.P., Dr. A. Commins, M.P., Mr. J. A. Willox, M.P., Principal Rendall, Alderman J. N. Stolterfoht, Alderman T. H. Williams, Councillors A. Crosthwaite, W. Oulton, Morris P. Jones, Maxwell H. Maxwell, Junr., Austin Taylor, A. T. Salvidge, and Louis S. Cohen, Canon T. Major Lester, and Colonel John Pilkington.

Sir William Forwood, in opening the proceedings, said: "The library in which they were assembled was built to take the place of the old North-end Library, which was situated in Great Nelson Street. That library had done good service in its generation, but the population had moved from that centre, and those people who remained had been accommodated by the opening of the Central Library in William Brown Street. The site upon which the new library was built was in the immediate vicinity of that formerly occupied by a beacon. This beacon guided vessels, richly laden with merchandise, up the River Mersey, and he hoped that the building which had taken its place would guide the residents of Kirkdale and Everton to where the rich stores of knowledge lay. They had endeavoured to make it an up-to-date library, and therefore had recognised the claims of the coming woman. When the lord and master of a house went to the rooms to enjoy his newspaper or book his better half might accompany him and occupy herself in an interesting way in the next room. The committee recognised that if they wanted to make readers the best plan was to make them when they were young, and therefore they had provided a reading room for boys and a special catalogue of books suitable for boys. The great thing was to encourage reading amongst young men, because when that had been done a great step had been taken towards their advancement in life. One half of the building was devoted to technical instruction, some very fine class rooms having been

constructed. The classes, in fact, had already started, such was the eagerness of the young men of the district to take advantage of the opportunities afforded. When the residents began to appreciate the thorough-going character of the instruction which would be given in those rooms, and how valuable it would be to all in their different careers, he felt sure that the classes would be largely attended. In his young days such advantages were not to be had, and therefore he thought the country had suffered in consequence."

Lord Derby, in declaring the building open, said "it was a privilege which he highly valued that amongst the many duties, pleasant for the most part, which he had had to perform during his year of office, it should so happen that he was able, on nearly his last public appearance as chief magistrate of the city, to perform on behalf of the Corporation the ceremonial of opening that library and technical school. It was a great feature of the day that libraries had become so common and so popular. There were many people who predicted some forty or fifty years ago, when the establishment of public libraries was first mooted, that they would be taken up by those who were simply advocates of science and abstruse studies; that they would be crowded with books which would be slightly read, and that in point of fact so far from being in accordance with the requirements of the population, speaking generally, they would rather contain books which would be left on one side because of their dulness. Hence it was, he thought, that practical wisdom



EVERTON BRANCH LIBRARY.

General Reading Room.





had been shown by the managers of such institutions which belonged to public bodies in catering for the wants of the people with whom they had to deal, for all persons did not desire to apply themselves to philosophical studies. Those who had charge of the libraries had brought them up to date, so to speak, and had carefully regarded the class of books required for their readers, and had endeavoured not to drive but to lead the reading public into the proper channel. The efforts made in this direction had met with a legitimate success, and owing to the tact and management of those who had control of public libraries, especially in large places, the taste for reading, instead of falling off, had increased, and whereas readers were counted by hundreds some years ago, they were now counted by thousands. The North Branch Lending Library, now closed, was originally opened in the North Corporation Schools, and it commenced with a thousand volumes and about twenty readers, and it was open for the issue of books two evenings each week. A house was then taken; but afterwards the want of a reading room was felt, and it was then thought necessary for the committee to seek for larger library accommodation, and to supply a cheerful and commodious reading room. Now from small beginnings, step by step, they had come to the time of the opening of the library in which they were assembled. He might mention that since the opening of the North Lending Library in 1853, there had been 85,400 persons who had enjoyed its privileges,

and 7,800,000 volumes had been lent to them. That was a little guide as to the instruction and enjoyment which had been afforded by the use of the building in past times. Now that they had a better equipped library, it was hoped that it would have even better effect than the old one, and that it would attract more readers, who would, perhaps, be encouraged to pursue their studies, whether they were studies merely of passing interest or taken up with a practical object. As regarded the separation of the sexes, that was no doubt bringing matters to a great extent up to date. They were right to provide for all persons, and, he thought, the provision of a boys' reading room and library was a very good and wise step to be taken in the interests of the public. Valuable works of reference, which one generally saw occupying conspicuous places in a library, did not, perhaps, attract boys either by their titles or their contents, and, therefore, did not encourage reading amongst the younger generation. He hoped that in time to come there might be even a further extension of the library, and that the Library Committee, with that wisdom which seemed to characterise their proceedings in the past, would consider how to extend even further the privileges which were conferred on the greater part of the community. With regard to the Technical School, there was no doubt there were many who would take advantage of the accommodation which was being afforded them in Everton. He believed that the technical instruction movement, in the words of

their cousins across the Atlantic, had come to stay. For years they had rather been behind the times. They thought that their old rule of experience and the rule of thumb was good enough for them, and they allowed other nations perhaps to steal a march upon them, and through no less experience than that which Englishmen possessed, aided by science, other nations had in many cases equalled, and in some cases surpassed, this country within the last ten or fifteen years. The British nation, however, had wakened up to the very unpleasant conviction that they were allowing their trade and trade skill to pass away from them. Hence he believed the real feeling for technical education and instruction had sprung up amongst them. It had taken root and it had flourished, and indeed had flourished with such rapidity as sometimes to give to friends of technical instruction some fear whether the impetus was not almost too great to last. For his own part he did not believe that under the usual circumstances that could be so. One word of warning, however, he would like to give those who had control of technical instruction, and that was that they should not be satisfied with that with which they had done, but should continually press forward, see what other countries were doing, and see that England should not only keep abreast of those countries, but head them, so that technical instruction in England might be what they had always boasted their manual labour had been, not only equal to but superior to other countries. Technical schools formed a very proper adjunct to a library such

as that. There was many a clever brain which would in the first instance be set thinking or aided by the volumes which were within the building, and he trusted that they would put the thoughts of readers or students into practical effect, and that by such means they would create a wise people possessed of prosperity and knowing how to properly use it."

Alderman Dr. Commins, M.P., in proposing a vote of thanks to his lordship, said "that they had furnished in the new building materials by which people might be turned from mere routine individuals and items in society into thinking, rational, moral, and useful members of the community."

Councillor M. H. Maxwell, who seconded, said "that before the enlargement of the city they had in Liverpool only one branch library which was really worth calling a library. When the Libraries Committee took in hand the idea of increasing the reading facilities for the public, they considered in which part the libraries should be placed, and they had very properly decided that the needs of Everton and Kirkdale first required attention. The committee were very much indebted to the exertions of Mr. Austin Taylor in bringing about the erection of that building."

Mr. Austin Taylor, who supported the motion, thanked Mr. Maxwell for his kind observations, and said "that he felt, when he had the opportunity of pressing the claims of Everton, he was only doing his duty as a representative of the ward. It had been said that it was a wise policy to

establish such an institution in Everton, the inference being that the people in that district required some stimulus to their mental faculties. He, however, was quite convinced that the people of Everton were already sufficiently enlightened, that the library was only a further means of adding to their stock of knowledge. He could not conceive any more useful purpose that that building could be put to, than the acquisition by the younger readers of that habit and capacity of thought which would be so useful to them in after days."

The opening of this branch library seemed to produce for some half-mile round it quite an epidemic of reading. Young and old resorted to the library in such large numbers that the spacious rooms provided in it were constantly crowded to excess. This was particularly the case with the boys' room. No doubt the novelty of such a room, for this was the first of its kind provided by the Library Committee, had much to do with its wonderful success.

The choice of numerous illustrated books and periodicals with their stories of voyage and adventure was a thing so new to most, if not all of the young folk, that unbounded pleasure and delight was taken in simple, rapid inspection of the illustrations, and then exchanging the books for others.

After a while this fickleness with the majority of the boys gradually wore off, and they began to take pleasure in the contents of the books, and to read for the enjoyment it gave them.

If any justification were needed for the action of the committee in choosing this populous district for the erection of a library and transferring the books from the old North Library, it is strikingly illustrated by the 140,921 volumes issued during the twelve months previous to closing it, and the 392,320 volumes issued during the first twelve months in the new library, either for home reading or to be perused in its several reading rooms, and this quite apart from the many readers who almost exclusively confined themselves to the magazines and newspapers.

In the year 1895 an Act was passed sanctioning the extension of the city boundaries so as to include the townships of Wavertree and Walton, the rural portions of Toxteth Park, and a large part of the rural district of West Derby. One of the conditions made with the Local Boards governing these districts previous to incorporation with Liverpool was that they should be each provided with a public library.

Such a library was opened in Walton, and South Toxteth, in 1897, by utilising the offices of the two Local Boards. Wavertree will shortly be in possession of a library and reading rooms of considerable architectural merit, specially designed by the City Surveyor, Mr. Thomas Shelmerdine, and in regard to plan and internal arrangements by the City Librarian. The claims of West Derby have been, for various reasons, delayed, but plans are in preparation for a library and reading rooms for this district which, when erected, will by their design, finish, and completeness be a source

of gratification to the residents of that locality, and a full compensation for several years of patient waiting for the fulfilment of the promise made when they became citizens of Liverpool. Further reference to this library is made later on.

Liverpool is frequently compared to its detriment with Manchester and Birmingham in regard to the number of its branch libraries. But those who do so seldom inquire if there is a reason. Until 1899 the Library rate of Liverpool was only 1d. in the pound against 2d. in the pound in Manchester. The latter city is in the position of being able to devote the whole of this rate to their libraries. Their art gallery and museum are supported from other sources. Birmingham has no natural history museum, but for its libraries and art gallery it levies a rate according to their requirements. It will be obvious then why Liverpool with only a penny rate, and with an art gallery and in part a museum to maintain out of it, should have frequently felt the pinch of poverty and been hindered in developing her existing institutions to the utmost and increasing the number of her branch libraries. In the year mentioned, with the sanction of the City Council and the ratepayers, application was made to Parliament for an increase of the Library and Museum rate from one penny in the pound to three-halfpence, which was granted. With this improvement of income the Library Committee were enabled to carry out several important structural developments and improvements, not the least of which was the efficient warming

and mechanical ventilation of the Brown Library and Museum. Of its success those who can remember the state of the atmosphere in the Brown Reading Room when crowded with readers and the atmosphere now, under like conditions, will judge best.

Reference has already been made incidentally to the bequest of art books to the library by Mr. Hugh Frederick Hornby, of Wavertree. This bequest was formerly communicated by his solicitors to the Town Clerk in a letter dated 31st July, 1900.

Since the foundation of the library no gift to it can at all compare with this in extent, value, and importance. The collection of books, engravings, and autograph letters of eminent personages which has been brought together with such care, loving interest, and indifference to cost justly entitle it to be called princely. One of its most noteworthy features is the number and rariety of books it contains illustrative of French engraving during the eighteenth century. In this the collection is of exceptional interest and importance. To attempt to describe the collection as a whole and appraise its value would be to court failure. Almost every book, by reason of its art binding, extra illustrations, original drawings, autograph letters, or by some characteristic removing it from the category of an ordinary edition justifies a description of its own. It is only when the catalogue now in preparation is published that an approximate idea can be conveyed of this benefaction as a whole, and of the taste and culture of its generous donor.



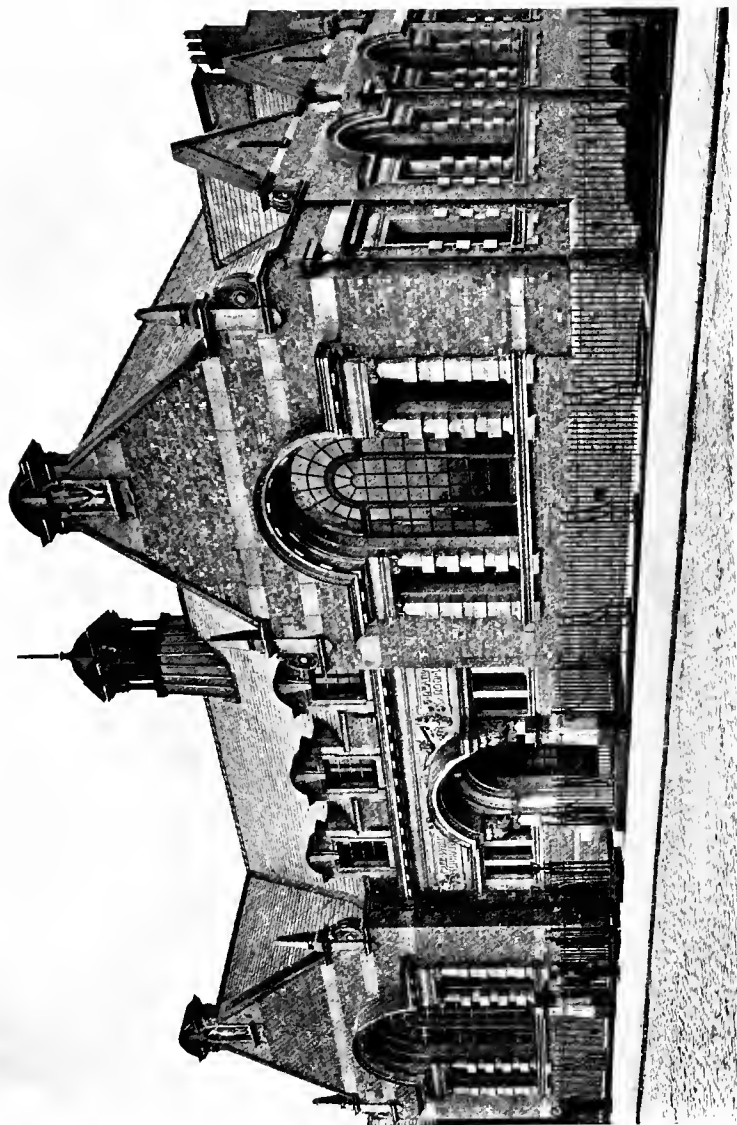
The volumes number upwards of 7,200, and the engravings and etchings exceed 3,000, many being artists' proofs. The autograph letters are contained in some twenty boxes, and are of the greatest historical and literary interest apart from their unique character and value. But the indebtedness of the city of Liverpool to this literary and art connoisseur extends still further. Desiring that his gift should be housed and cared for, as it fully deserved, he also bequeathed a sum of £10,000 to erect a suitable building in which the collection should find a permanent home. Plans for such a building have been most carefully prepared by the City Surveyor, Mr. Shelmerdine, with the assistance of the Chief Librarian, and there is every prospect that this annexe to the Picton Reading Room will, in design, decoration, fittings, and arrangements be a worthy memorial to the generous donor.

## CHAPTER XIV.

THE NEW TOXTETH BRANCH OPENED BY  
MR. ANDREW CARNEGIE.

IF any event were necessary to bring this jubilee record to a fitting conclusion, none, perhaps, could better serve the purpose than the opening of the new South or Toxteth Library, by Mr. Andrew Carnegie, on the 15th October, 1902. As a matter of sentiment, one might have wished that Mr. Carnegie's engagements had permitted him to have performed the ceremony three days later, on St. Luke's Day—the birthday of the parent institution, and the birthday of its first branch library.

In asking the great promoter and munificent benefactor of public libraries to perform the inaugural ceremony, the committee felt there was some justification in making the request, as Liverpool was largely the home of the free library movement; and Mr. Ewart, after whom the first Free Library Act was commonly called, was a native of Liverpool, and the building about to be opened was the new home of a library born on November 1st, 1853, and, therefore, probably one of the earliest free lending libraries in the country. The building too was not unworthy of the "hour and the man." It was dignified



TOXTETH BRANCH LIBRARY.



and attractive in design, its several reading rooms cheerful and comfortable, its fittings and arrangements according to the latest ideas, and the number and character of the books contained in it calculated to give it an important place among the institutions of its kind. Mr. Shelmerdine, the architect, and the Chief Librarian contributed of their best, with the result that the library and its arrangements received the high encomiums of all present.

The Committee's invitation, through Sir William Forwood, obtained from Mr. Carnegie a letter of cordial acquiescence, and the day of opening having been definitely fixed, suitable preparations were made to give *éclat* to the ceremony. The building externally was made bright and gay with bunting, and internally no less bright by shrubs and flowers; while line upon line of books in their bindings of various hues contributed their own quota of colour and brightness. The pleasure of the visitors was promoted by the strains of music at suitable intervals, and brilliant sunshine perfected the whole and crowned it with success.

While in the district, Mr. Carnegie was the guest of Sir William Forwood, at Bromborough Hall. On crossing over to Liverpool on the day of the opening ceremony, a visit was first made to the Reference Library, William Brown Street.

Accompanied by the Lord Mayor (Alderman Petrie) and Sir William Forwood, Mr. Carnegie was received at the library by Alderman Stolterfoht

(Chairman of the Library Sub-Committee), Councillor R. D. Holt (Deputy Chairman of the General Committee), and the Chief Librarian.

Mr. Carnegie viewed the library and its reading rooms with much appreciation, and was evidently highly pleased with the number of readers which he saw perusing the books and periodicals before them. The company then proceeded to the Toxteth Library.

The Lord Mayor (Alderman Petrie) presided at the opening ceremony, and amongst the distinguished company present were: Sir William Forwood, D.L., J.P., and Lady Forwood, Councillor Robert D. Holt, D.L., J.P., and Mrs. Holt, the Dean of Ely, Mr. Henry Yates Thompson, Professor Sir Richard Jebb, Aldermen J. N. Stolterfoht, Maxwell H. Maxwell, J.P. A. Commins, LL.D., and W. Bartlett; Councillors John Lea, J.P., A. Crosthwaite, W. Oulton, J.P., W. Denton, J. Harrison Jones, Morris P. Jones, J.P., William Evans, J.P., Chaloner Dowdall, M.A., H. R. Rathbone, M.A., R. Dart, R. H. Bullen, J. Morris, T. Roberts, G. B. Smith-Brodrick, R. R. Meade-King, P. McGuffie, W. Boote, and S. Jude; the Misses Forwood, the Rev. Dr. John Watson, Sir Edward Russell, Sir T. Hughes, J.P., Sir John Brunner, Lieut.-Colonel Porter, Very Rev. E. Goethals, Canon Irvine, Mr. A. F. Warr, M.P., Principal Dale, M.A., Professor Mackay, M.A., Professor Glynn, M.D., Dr. Carter, Canon Burbidge, Colonel John Pilkington, Mr. Edgar A. Browne, Rev. John Sephton, M.A., the Town Clerk

(Mr. E. R. Pickmere, M.A.), Mr. G. H. Ball, Miss Florence Melly, Mrs. Madden, the Misses Hornby, Rev. W. J. Adams, Mr. M. Fitzpatrick, Mr. J. C. Stitt, Mr. Joshua Sing, R. Barrow (City Controller of Accounts), J. E. A. Rogers (City Treasurer), the Chief Librarian (P. Cowell), and F. T. Turton (Deputy Surveyor).

The Lord Mayor, in opening the proceedings, said: "We are gathered here this morning to perform a very interesting ceremony, the opening of this library in the South end of the city. Liverpool, I think it will be admitted by everybody, has done a great work in the construction of libraries throughout the city. For many years we have, of course, had the Central Library, but owing to the progress of the Library and Arts Committee we have now several branch libraries in different districts. We are very glad indeed to-day to see with us Mr. Carnegie. Of course we all recognise him as a great authority on libraries, and whilst the citizens of Liverpool have been doing for themselves what Mr. Carnegie is kind enough to do for others, I am sure we are very pleased to see him and to have his advice on the subject of our libraries. He, I am sure, will tell you that he has gone through this library, and I hope he has found it all he expected it to be. The Libraries Committee certainly have done all they possibly can to make the building handsome and permanent, and I think it is the opinion of all that they have succeeded in doing so. I will not stand between you and Mr. Carnegie, who is our guest here this morning, and

I have very great pleasure in introducing him to you, and in asking him to perform the ceremony of opening this library."

Mr. Andrew Carnegie, LL.D., who was received with great applause, then addressed the meeting. He said: "My Lord Mayor, magistrates, and ladies and gentlemen of Liverpool, certainly you could have given me no more congenial task than to perform the ceremony of to-day, but my delight is heightened when I address the Lord Mayor to find in him a fellow Scot, and not only that but a fellow Fifer. We have had a great deal of delightful conversation since my arrival under the protection of Sir William and Lady Forwood, and the Scotch element was not altogether absent. It is astonishing how many of the people of Liverpool are Scots, for we Scots claim as Scots men or women born in Liverpool whose fathers and mothers were Scots. I am reminded that Liverpool was the pioneer city in regard to Free Libraries. It was my extreme pleasure in receiving the freedom of Dumfries to suggest that the library there should be called the Ewart Library as a tribute to a Liverpool man. It was he who succeeded in passing the Free Libraries Act, which unlike some other Acts of Parliament creates no sensation, causes no partizan bitterness, and who shall say that that one Act has not already done, and will in its operation do more, as I believe, to elevate the people of Great Britain than a hundred Acts of your Parliament which have created partizan bitterness. My Lord Mayor, may I suggest that





*Photo. by W. Crooke.*

ANDREW CARNEGIE, LL.D.



Liverpool has had no citizen more worthy of such an honour in the city of his birth than that which Dumfries has paid to Mr. Ewart. I like a free library because it is free. It is a grand symbol of true genuine democracy, and this more an exhibition of democracy than perhaps any library I have spoken in, because it is the gift of no citizen, of no man; but is from foundation stone to turret paid for by taxation, so that the poorest citizen of Liverpool contributes in his proportion as much as the multi-millionaire in support not of a library, not of the library, but of his library. He is a proprietor here, and there is no privilege that may be enjoyed by the wealthy or the titled—no, not even by your august Lord Provost himself—which is not the birthright of the humblest citizen of Liverpool. Such an institution as this has a far-reaching influence beyond the mere reading of books. I say it goes near to the springs of man, the foundation of that indomitable independence to do or die, to stand or fall, that makes man man. But you do not consider a free library only great in what it does for those who read its books. It is great for what it does in enabling the poor citizens of Liverpool in passing through her streets to look up and say—‘Yes, I am a Landlord there.’ That is the thing that tells. Now I wish to congratulate you upon this library. Strangely enough, before I left the North, my Pittsburg Committee came to me and said they wanted a better branch library than anything they had. The development of the branch libraries had been so great that I must

not expect to pay 50,000 or 60,000 dollars any more for a branch library. They wanted to submit one that would want 125,000 dollars. I have looked all over this building, and I find here many of the improvements that they suggested. I have just been through the women's room, and I have seen the boys' room, and I come to a point which I wish to mention in regard to the hall. My experience is there is nothing that has developed any branch library equal to a hall. I suggested one at the little fishing village of Port Mahomet, and by altering a few partitions then turned the reading room into a big hall, and when I delivered the opening address, I told them I wanted them to put a little stage in it, and they have done so. I advised them strongly to cultivate the local talent of Port Mahomet. I told them that they had amongst them actors, musicians, men who could speak, that they had possibly Members of Parliament, and, perhaps, even a Lord Provost. I advised them to form a musical club, a dramatic club, and various other organisations for the development of local talent. Of the modest New Year gifts we received, I think, the one that gave us as much satisfaction as any, was the programme for the annual entertainment of the local performers in that fishing village of Port Mahomet. Organisations of that kind make every one neighbours. They create a kindly, neighbourly feeling, and all that you need add is a man or a woman—and I am sure you have them here—who will devote himself or herself to finding out local talent, and

encouraging the modest to come forward and perform. I said to those men at Port Mahomet, I, myself, was a member of such an organisation, and if I have any facility in speech, or if I have any assurance or self-possession—which I did not have as a boy—I attribute it to the fact that I played many parts in an amateur theatrical club, and I was accounted a good actor. My favourite part was, of course, always the lover; but, of course, I may say, before I met a certain lady, all my love making was purely in fun. I must not keep you long, and I will refer only to the important parts about the library. Fiction you will find somewhat of a difficulty, and I should like to give the committee my views upon that subject. An art dealer in New York said to me one day—‘Mr. Carnegie, I always like to see a pioneer from the West come in here and look over all my fine art and even buy a chromo, for if that man becomes prosperous he comes back year after year, and I can give you the names of several of my best customers who now come in and buy true works of art.’ Now it is so in other respects. A book is a book, although there is nothing in it, and I hold that if you can induce a working man or woman to come into this library and take anything like a book, my Lord Provost—I mean my Lord Mayor, you have not yet reached the dignity of Lord Provost, but being a Scot there is still hope—some good seed may be sown. There is something in a bound book, and I understand that superstition, as you may call it, of the Chinaman who will not step upon a printed

page. He considers it is unlucky. Well, he ought to consider it so, and, I may say, it was a Chinese blacksmith who gave us movable types. Well, I have hinted time and again whether it might not be necessary to provide that no fiction should be admitted to a free library unless it were a year old; but, ladies and gentlemen, think what a fatal epidemic this would evoke in the publishing line. Nine out of ten of everyone of the novels that are published would be slaughtered, and the epitaph would be justified—‘If I were so soon to be done for, I wonder what I was begun for.’ But I have changed my views upon that point, and I think there is no use in providing a step ladder for the aspiring to climb, if you make the first step of that ladder too high. Therefore, I hope the committee will be very chary about not admitting fiction, which you can induce a working man or working woman to take home to read. I do not speak at this moment to an audience of working men, therefore I will refrain from urging the advantages of a library. You all understand them. You prove by your actions that the opening of a library building is a good work, and I will refrain from speaking one word in defence of a library. I will only conclude, my Lord Provost—I mean my Lord Mayor—I have been addressing Lord Provosts for ten days. You are Lord Mayor for the present; but, perhaps, you are a Lord Provost yet to be. I beg to thank you for inviting me to perform this opening ceremony. Nothing could be more congenial. Liverpool is the pioneer not only in regard to

libraries; but also in regard to municipal affairs, so far as I know, in the world. I have read reports sent home to Glasgow, and I know what you are doing about the housing of the people, and I know what you are doing about temperance, and if I were a citizen of Liverpool I should have one great ambition—I should like to be Chairman of the Vigilance Committee. I conclude this ceremony in the confident belief that future centuries are to see your libraries occupying more and more important positions as agencies for the further improvement of the people. They cannot work injury. They must always work good. They cannot pauperise; because they are the people's own property, and they cannot fail to be to coming generations a fountain from which only healing waters can flow."

Sir William Forwood said: "I have much pleasure in rising to move a very hearty vote of thanks to Mr. Carnegie for his kind presence here to-day, and for the most admirable speech which he has delivered to us. Mr. Carnegie stated that if he was ambitious of one thing it was to be a member of the Vigilance Committee of Liverpool. I do not think the Vigilance Committee any longer exists. It has done its work, and we do not now require a Vigilance Committee, but if Mr. Carnegie were to dwell with us I think we may promise him a seat on the City Council in November, with the prospect of becoming Lord Mayor within a year. The Library Committee, over which I have the honour to preside, feeling that they were the

pioneers of the library movement in this country, and I presume in the world, were desirous of paying Mr. Carnegie the greatest compliment they could, in recognition of the great work he has done for libraries not only in his own country of America but throughout the length and breadth of England and Scotland, and more than that, for the very wise conditions which he has attached to all his great and many benefactions. This library in which we are assembled to-day has taken the place of the old South Library built many years ago—thirty or forty years ago—at the foot of Parliament Street. That library became no longer suitable for its purpose, and we have erected this library which, I think, is fully equipped and up-to-date in every particular. In the olden time we thought it sufficient to have lending libraries without reading rooms. Now we find it necessary to have a large reading room such as the one in which we are assembled, and also to have a reading room for women and boys. The first experience of opening a reading room for women was this—there was a great deal more talking than reading. I am happy to tell you that it is a thing of the past, and there are women readers who come and are excellent and steady readers. In the same way the first great difficulty with the boys was that they thought it was their province to play leapfrog over the chairs and benches, and I believe we had to go so far as to call in the police to maintain order. Now all that is a thing of the past, and if you visit the reading rooms you will find boys crowding them and steadily perusing some book in which they are



interested, so the experiment of enlarging our libraries, and attaching a reading room for women and also a reading room for boys, has been wonderfully successful. Now, my Lord Mayor, to-day has an interest of a double character. We are not only opening this library, which I think is in every way a model branch library, but we are celebrating the jubilee of the library movement in Liverpool. Fifty years ago next Thursday, the 18th October, the first Reference Library was opened in Duke Street, and contained 8,000 volumes. But although we are thus celebrating the jubilee of our library movement in Liverpool, so far as the date of our first reference library is concerned, we can go still further back than that. As Mr. Carnegie has just stated we were rather ahead of Parliament; in fact the Public Libraries Act introduced by Mr. Ewart in 1850 was the outcome of a public meeting held in Liverpool a year before. So we can claim not only the first library in the country, but we can also claim to have prompted Mr. Ewart to introduce that useful and valuable Act. Now there has been a great deal of correspondence of late in the newspapers about libraries, and I think the position is somewhat misunderstood. By the Libraries Act local authorities are empowered to levy a penny rate for the purpose of establishing and maintaining lending libraries. Well, a penny rate will not build a library, but when a library is built it will maintain it. Now Mr. Carnegie has stepped forward into the breach and said, 'I will build a library for you. You cannot raise the £10,000 or

the £12,000 necessary. I will build the library, but you must then apply to have power under the Act to levy a rate to maintain it.' I think that is a very wise condition. You know how many people are anxious to have libraries who never think that when a library is built it has to be maintained, and libraries are not cheap things to maintain. Not merely have you to maintain your building but you have to keep your books up-to-date, and therefore you are always adding to the number of books on your shelves. This is a fact I think not fully appreciated, and therefore I think that the condition attached by Mr. Carnegie is a very wise condition, and a very far-seeing condition. Now I see that in some urban districts they have refused to levy a library rate, and it is said to be a question whether libraries really justify an extra rate upon the poor. I think that argument was exploded years and years ago. This is not the time or place to do it, but I should be prepared at another time to fully justify the imposition of a library rate. There is no rate which we levy which so soon returns full value to the community. We cannot shut our eyes to this great fact, that for the progress of civilisation physical forces are equalised. It is no longer the strong arm but the strong head which is the moving force in society, and if that be so, we are bound to educate the intellectual faculties. We have acknowledged that by introducing elementary education, and now we have committees going in the House of Commons in reference to middle-class education. Well, what will be the result? You are giving

the people of the country opportunities for the acquisition of knowledge, and how on earth are the people when they leave school to follow up those opportunities unless you supply libraries. I saw it stated in the newspaper the other day that cheap literature and the penny press are taking the place of libraries. I do not think so. On the contrary, as Mr. Carnegie said just now, the more a man reads the more he wants to read, and the fact of being able to buy a book for 1d., or 2d., or 3d., will induce him to want something better to go on with his studies. So we cannot stop, but we must provide people with some means of continuing their education, and the only means I can suggest is the establishment of libraries. Now let me quote one figure to bear me out. Ten years ago the books taken from the libraries of Liverpool for home reading were 300,000. Last year they were over 1,000,000. I cannot give you any fact which more fully sustains my argument that the increase of the love of reading is going on very rapidly indeed, and it does prove that the facilities for obtaining books are greatly appreciated and enjoyed. As for fiction forming part of our issue that is quite true. I believe at one time it formed 80 per cent. of our issue. Some years ago it came down to 75 per cent., and I believe to-day it is 62 per cent. I believe if you once turn a man into a library, and he begins reading books of fiction, some of which are very admirable, he will not stop at fiction, but he becomes a reader and he goes on. In that way I feel sure our libraries are doing a great deal of good. In Liverpool we have

established six branch libraries in the last seven or eight years, and the outcry is still for more. Ten years ago, when I became the chairman of this committee, we had no encouragement to establish branch libraries. People threw cold water on them. Now the outcry is for libraries here and there, and even this rich Corporation can hardly vote money quick enough to meet the demand. The Parliamentary Committee of the Corporation have very properly annexed new districts to Liverpool, and the first thing they promise in order to induce them to join in the annexation is that they shall have a branch library, but they never consult the members of the Library Committee to ask how that is to be done. They leave us face to face with the Act of Parliament with its very serious obligations, and they say, 'You must carry it out,' so I am very glad indeed to have this opportunity of explaining why the Library Committee may be obliged to ask you to contribute another halfpenny to the rates in a very short time. I thank you very much for giving me this opportunity, on behalf of our Library Committee, of tendering our very warmest thanks to Mr. Carnegie for coming here to-day, and for the very practical and eloquent remarks he has made to us, and the opportunity of thanking him personally for the great and noble efforts he has made in this country to spread free libraries throughout the length and breadth of it. I do not know how many he has built or helped to build in this country and in Scotland, but if I say they have been 600 I believe I am not very far wrong,





*Photo. by Medrington.*

ROBERT D. HOLT, D L., J.P.

and when you think of the enormous nucleus which that means, I think you will agree that the thanks of the British nation are due to Mr. Carnegie for his magnificent work."

Councillor Robert D. Holt, in seconding the vote of thanks, said: "It is really a pleasure to join in the vote of thanks to Mr. Carnegie for coming here to-day, and for the interesting address he has delivered. It is most encouraging to the Library Committee, who might have thought that they were getting a little behind the age, to be informed that we are progressing and keeping up to the times. That assurance is most encouraging, and as the Chairman, Sir William Forwood, has said, you must not grudge us another halfpenny in the pound. We will spend it well, and you can make it easily enough. You have nothing to do but to make the money, and when you have made it we will spend it. We may remind you that these new libraries in the outlying districts cannot be maintained upon nothing. We must have money, and for my part I consider that the good work we are doing in regard to such libraries as these is a most encouraging feature in the municipal life and in the history of Liverpool. We think, therefore, that we might fairly rely that the rate-payers will not grudge us the necessary amount to support them. I am sure, ladies and gentlemen, we all join most cordially in a vote of thanks to Mr. Carnegie for coming here to-day with his vast experience in regard to libraries, and we are very glad to hear his assurance that really we are not behind the times."

The Dean of Ely supported. In the course of his remarks he said: "It is a great pleasure to me to say a word in support of this vote of thanks to Mr. Carnegie. I do not, as Dean of Ely, nor even as an old Liverpool clergyman, but as an old Liverpool boy who was one of the readers in the Free Library at the bottom of Parliament Street. I read Sir Walter Scott's novels for the first time entirely in the edition that was to be found in that library in Parliament Street. I know of no one who more desires education and appreciates the need of books than on the one hand the clergymen of England, and on the other hand the children of England. I hear you have a boys' library here, and that reminds me of a visit to Boston a few years ago, a city I may say which struck me as being more like Liverpool than any other American city. One thing which interested me very greatly in Boston was a children's library, about the size of this, which was furnished with bookcases all round the walls of sufficient height for the children to reach down their books. At the end of the afternoon, when the children were breaking out of school, they poured into this room and were met by a number of ladies who formed the Advising Committee of that children's library, and advised them as to the best books to read. I do not know whether you have such a library here in Liverpool, but let me commend it to the Library Committee and to the ladies whom I see here so largely represented—let me commend to them that they should do something to educate the tastes of the



children in reading the right sort of books. I have great pleasure in supporting this vote of thanks."

Alderman J. N. Stolterfoht said: "We have listened with great pleasure to Mr. Carnegie's most useful address, and I am sure the committee will take to heart all his hints, and I hope they will give a fresh impulse to the work of that committee. I have one duty to perform, and that is to request you to give a very cordial vote of thanks to the Lord Mayor, or according to his new title the Lord Provost, for his kindness in being with us to-day. He has performed his duties in no perfunctory manner. He has given us the advantage of his experience, and has told us various things which will be useful to do, and I have very great pleasure in asking you to accord him a vote of thanks."

Councillor John Lea said: "It affords me very great pleasure to second in a very few words the vote of thanks proposed by my friend Mr. Stolterfoht. I think we all agree that although this is one of the closing meetings in connection with the Lord Mayor's year of office, it is by no means an unimportant one. It is one which is likely to have a great influence upon the district in which we meet. Mr. Carnegie in his brilliant speech was pleased to refer to the use in America or elsewhere of libraries for theatrical performances. We are not going for a moment to contrast our action with the action of America; but we are rather inclined to use our libraries in the evenings for the benefit of the public, by means of very interesting lectures in the winter season. These

lectures are of an instructive and interesting character, and go a very long way to supplement the information that our people get by reading the literature contained in the library. May I just be allowed to say that the Arts Committee has not forgotten us on this occasion. You have only to look at the walls to see the treasures they have lent us."

Mr. Carnegie, before the Lord Mayor replied, formally declared the new building to be opened. He said: "Ladies and gentlemen, the golden key that is in my hand that can open so many doors I now put to the highest use to which any key in my opinion can be put. I now declare this free library open to all people without money and without price."

The Lord Mayor said: "I am very much obliged to you for the cordial vote of thanks you have been good enough to pass for me. I am sure my duty has been a very simple one this morning. I am personally much indebted to Mr. Carnegie for the very kind way in which he spoke of myself. I happen to be a brother Scot from the kingdom of Fife; but I am not Lord Provost yet, and I do not know if the citizens of Liverpool would care to change the title of Lord Mayor to that of Lord Provost. It would no doubt occupy a week's debate in the City Council. Now, ladies and gentlemen, you are all requested to inspect the building, and I am sure you will be very much interested."

The assembly then broke up, and dispersed to inspect the library and its arrangements.

## CHAPTER XV.

### CONCLUSION: PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE.

AS a social function it may safely be assumed that the ceremony of the formal opening of the Toxteth Library was a great success; but the utilitarian and the Liverpool ratepayers will probably prefer to know if the objects for which the library was erected have been attained, and with the success it was hoped and anticipated.

Statistics have the reputation of being misleading; but it is not always easy to set them aside and resist their import.

During the first month after opening for business, the several departments of the library were besieged with readers of all ages and of both sexes, and the energies of the staff and the working arrangements were put to the severest strain. No doubt novelty, and an attractive and inviting looking building, had much to do with this, so it will be better to pass over the attendances and book issues during this time in order to obtain figures free from temporary inflation, with which to make a comparison with the work of the old library during a corresponding period in the previous year.

Taking a period of three months from the middle of November to the middle of February, the work of the new library is indicated by the following statistics:—

Volumes lent for home reading	- -	47,058
Volumes issued in the men's room	-	34,782
Volumes issued in the ladies' room	-	5,612
Volumes issued in the boys' room	-	<u>23,217</u>
Total	- - - -	110,669

In addition, the magazines, reviews, &c., read in the men's room numbered 29,533, in the ladies' room 8,316, in the boys' room 8,278; total 46,127. Further, it is estimated by means of periodical countings, that the newspapers read numbered 65,000. These figures together give a grand total of 221,716 books, magazines, and newspapers read or referred to during this limited period, as against an issue during a corresponding period of twelve months previously in the old premises of 35,938 volumes, exclusively for home reading.

As the greatest care is taken that the literature provided, particularly for the young, is of the healthiest character, these figures, and similarly those of the other libraries, are full of hope for the future, when the habit and taste for reading that which is of the best is confirmed.

The Toxteth Library, by its elevation, plan, and working arrangements, elicited from Mr. Carnegie many commendatory remarks which, coming from one who has seen much of public libraries, may not be taken as merely "complimentary."



TOXTETH BRANCH LIBRARY.  
General Reading Room.



That this inference is correct, the following letter addressed to Sir William Forwood on the 16th of December fully confirms.

NEW YORK, *Dec. 16th, 1902.*

MY DEAR SIR WILLIAM,

Delighted to hear of the progress of the Toxteth Library.

You mentioned that you wished to build another such branch somewhere costing about £13,000. If it would not be considered intrusive I should like to testify my appreciation of the public spirit of Liverpool, and especially of its partnership in the free library movement. It has a great record, having established a free library before the advent of the Libraries Act. Besides this, I was deeply impressed by the number of able citizens who give so much of their time, not to aims that end with miserable self, but for good of the community.

I do not make a practice of volunteering. I depend upon you and such of your other friends that I had the pleasure of meeting, to be sure the offer would be universally received with approval.

Please be sure to consult the late Lord Mayor, my fellow countryman, in your counsels, and believe me

Always very truly yours,

ANDREW CARNEGIE.

On this letter being read at a meeting of the Library Committee on January 28th, 1903, the following resolution was passed, which at the next ensuing meeting of the City Council was unanimously confirmed:—

That the Council be recommended to accept the very generous offer made by Mr. Andrew Carnegie to erect a new Branch Library at a cost of about £13,000, and that the best thanks of the Council be accorded to Mr. Carnegie for his handsome gift, and that the money offered by Mr. Carnegie be applied to the erection of a Branch Library in West Derby, and that the library be called the Andrew Carnegie Library.

This resolution, after being engrossed and illuminated, was duly forwarded to Mr. Carnegie.

The erection of the Andrew Carnegie Library will be proceeded with as rapidly as possible, and will in elevation and plan worthily perpetuate the name and generosity of the donor.

The Wavertree Branch Library approaches completion, and promises, by its architectural features and interior arrangements, to be an ornament and a benefit to a district whose rurality is fast disappearing before the enterprise of cottage builders. But the outlook of the Library Committee extends still further, so as to give the advantages of a library and reading rooms to the populous district of Kirkdale. Here, as soon as the drawings can be prepared, will be erected a building which will vie in size and plan with the later libraries in other districts, and be an agent equally valuable in the social betterment of the working classes.

It will be seen from the foregoing that valuable and extensive work has been done in recent years by the Library Committee in the erection, in populous and convenient centres, of public libraries and reading rooms principally for educational purposes; but an important work, it is thought by some members of the committee, might be worthily undertaken by erecting in parts of the city contiguous to the docks reading rooms with a less educational but more social object than those attached to the branch libraries.

The rooms, which need not be costly in their erection or administration, should, however, be



made comfortable by their furniture, cheerful and bright by the suspension of a few pictures, and generally attractive by the literature supplied.

During the winter illustrated lectures delivered in them would add to their popularity and usefulness. If rightly placed the success of such rooms is assured.

In the libraries projected, and in the reading rooms just described, the Library Committee have a vista of work of happy augury for the future.

The past supplies ample encouragement. The issue of upwards of 51,000,000 volumes, quite apart from a very large number of magazines and reviews, is a record illustrative at least of popular and vigorous management and warm appreciation on the part of the public.

But who shall gauge, if books, as Milton says, "contain a potencie of life in them to be as active as that soule was whose progeny they are," the mental strength and profit which has been imparted to tens of thousands of men and women during these past fifty years. And standing on a somewhat lower plane, of the pleasure and rational enjoyment given to a still greater number, whose lives and surroundings for the most part are sombre and heavy by reason of their perpetual round of monotonous duties.



## APPENDIX

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CIRCULAR, ISSUED BY THE PROVISIONAL COMMITTEE,  
*January 18th, 1851:—*

### LIVERPOOL PUBLIC LIBRARY, MUSEUM, AND GALLERY OF ART.

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THE COMMITTEE to whom has been entrusted the completion of this important Institution, for general and gratuitous public use, now appeal to the town at large for the requisite assistance.

Their special object is the formation of a PUBLIC LIBRARY, for which it is generally known that the Corporation have determined to provide accommodation, and which they will maintain in permanent usefulness when formed. They are desirous that the vast population of Liverpool, in many respects *peculiarly* in want of such a provision, may no longer be destitute of means of such importance, to the morals, intelligence, and happiness of all classes, and in the establishment of which other towns have already been so successful; but, it is necessary, at the same time, that the Town shall manifest its own feelings and interest by coming forward in a spirited manner *to store the LIBRARY with BOOKS.*

It may also be generally known that arrangements have been entered into between the Proprietors of the Liverpool Royal Institution and the Town Council, for the surrender of important property belonging to the former, for public use. This consists of the very valuable and interesting Museum of Natural History and the Gallery of Art, together with Warehouses, well calculated for the purposes of the Library. The sole condition is, *that the whole be maintained and devoted to the public; who, on the few free*

days which the Committee of the Royal Institution can at present afford, have shewn themselves well able and disposed to appreciate this privilege, as well as in all respects deserving of a more extended enjoyment of it.

If the appeal now made to the town at large be but met with the same liberality and cordial spirit of co-operation which have been evinced by the Town Council, by the Committee and Proprietors of the Royal Institution, and by several individuals who have already come forward to offer large donations both of money and books, the proposed noble institution will at once commence its existence, and offer advantages which many years would have been otherwise required to accomplish. The Museum of Natural History and the Gallery of Art, to be contributed by the Royal Institution, are in many respects already unsurpassed in value and interest by anything of the kind in this kingdom; and they will, the Committee have reason to believe, now be rapidly enriched by further donations and contributions of every description. The Committee will at once thankfully take charge of all suitable objects for these collections; but at present they more particularly urge on all ranks and classes, the *prompt contribution, according to their means and opportunities, of LIBERAL DONATIONS OF MONEY AND BOOKS* for that department which has yet to be brought into existence, and on which the perfect success of the whole depends—the *FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY*.

In consequence of the decision of the Town Council and of the arrangements with the Royal Institution—for the confirmation of which a Joint Committee of these two bodies propose to apply for the sanction of Parliament—a numerous meeting of those likely to interest themselves in the scheme, was summoned by the Town Clerk, and met in the Council Chamber of the Town Hall, *THE VENERABLE THE ARCHDEACON OF LIVERPOOL* in the Chair. By resolutions unanimously adopted, an Association was formed; and the large Provisional Committee, whose names are annexed, was afterwards chosen, who at their first Meeting appointed an Executive Working Committee, with power to add to their number.

Temporary accommodation for Books has been provided in one of the Rooms of the Royal Institution, and the Committee now make an earnest appeal to the inhabitants of the town and neighbourhood, of every grade, to contribute at once whatever they are able and disposed to give, in aid of the objects which they have in view.

The Donations solicited are—

- I. CONTRIBUTIONS IN MONEY.
- II. BOOKS (suited to any class of the community, or which might be exchanged for others, if necessary, by the Committee).
- III. OBJECTS FOR THE MUSEUM AND GALLERY OF ART.

An application to the Secretary, at the Royal Institution, Colquitt Street (personally or by post) will have prompt attention; and will secure an immediate opportunity of forwarding anything, without expense, to its destination, or any information or personal explanation that may be desired.

SUBSCRIPTIONS are received by the Treasurer, at 1, Goree Piazzas; also at the Banks of Messrs. HEYWOOD & Co., LEYLAND & Co., MOSS & Co., the BOROUGH BANK, and the BANK OF LIVERPOOL.

BOOKS will be received at all times at the Royal Institution, either by the entrance in Colquitt Street or by that in Seel Street.

THOMAS B. HORSFALL, PRESIDENT.

ROYAL INSTITUTION,  
18th January, 1851.

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*The following Subscriptions and Donations have been announced to the Committee, before the issuing of the Circulars:—*

The Mayor of Liverpool, £50; William Brown, M.P., £100; Thomas B. Horsfall, Theodore W. Rathbone, Hu. Hornby, Jos. B. Yates, and J. P. Heywood, £50 each; James Aikin, Son & Co., Robert M'Andrew, William Rathbone, and John Clow, £25 each; Samuel Holme, and the Misses Yates (Farmfield), £20 each; The Recorder, £12 12; J. A. Picton, Thos. J. Kilpin, Jeffery & Morrish, William Balleny, and W. Ridyard,

£10 each; Thomas Fleming, Rev. Dr. Raffles, Dr. Dickinson, Alfred King, Thomas Palmer, Thomas Bouch, Thomas Milner & Son, Thomas Chaffers, T. F. Hampton, Miss Rhoda M. Hope, and Miss Charlotte Hope, £5 each; Chapman & Callis, £4 4; J. H. E. W. Weightman, J. W. Pilcher, R. M. Cunningham, James C. M'Andrew, and William Benbow, £3 3 each; Thomas Duncan, and Thomas Brakell, £2 2 each; Thomas Gray, Thomas Dale, J. Adams, jun., Gerard Hornby, and Richard Crosby, £1 1 each.

From the Earl of Harrowby, the Parliamentary Library of the late Earl; from the Committee of the Liverpool Library, a Set of Duplicate Works, consisting of more than 2000 vols.; from the Ven. Archdeacon Brooks, Dodsley's Annual Register complete, and several vols. of the Edinburgh Review; from John Eden, the Parker Society's Publications from the first, the continuation of the series to be presented also; from John Mather, Sets, nearly complete, of the Edinburgh and Westminster Reviews; from the Secretary, 200 vols.; from Edward Fletcher, 106 vols.; from Thos. Fleming, 50 vols.; from Robert M'Andrew, 32 vols.; from the Rev. D. James, 30 vols.; from A. Leighton, the British Poets, in 20 vols., with other Works; from Thomas Sansom, a collection of native Mosses, and other collections for a Botanical Museum; from James Boardman, a model of the Portland Vase, wood blocks for printing the figures on it, and a large Map of the United States; from James Fraser, the Binding of 100 vols.; from Richard Scragg, the printing of 1000 Circulars.

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PROVISIONAL COMMITTEE.

*Elected January 3rd, 1851.*

[The mark \* denotes Members of the General Committee; and † Members of the Joint Committee of the Town Council and Royal Institution.]

\* *President*—THOMAS BERRY HORSFALL.

\* *Treasurer*—JOHN AIKIN.

\* *Hon. Secretary*—REV. A. HUME, LL.D., F.S.A.

† THE WORSHIPFUL THE MAYOR OF LIVERPOOL.

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† Henry Ashton	* Thomas Bouch
* † Thomas Avison, F.S.A.	Henry Bremner
William H. Bainbrigge, F.R.C.S.L.	* † Ven. Archdeacon Brooks, M.A.
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 \*†Hugh Hornby  
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 \*Richard V. Yates





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